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THE POKAGONS

BY

CECILIA BAIN BUECHNER

Indiana Historical
Society Publications

Volume 10

Number 5

INDIANAPOLIS
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY
1933

Helen & Graydon Blue
Ligonier
Ind.
March 1956

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A special edition of this pamphlet, 200 copies, with four additional illustrations and paging 1-62 has been printed for the author.

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INTRODUCTION

In writing this sketch an effort has been made to collect and combine the fragments of history concerning the Pokagons, hoping thus to make it more accessible and to aid in its preservation as well as to pay tribute to Leopold and Simon Pokagon, who merit a place of honor in Indian history and are richly deserving of our homage and recognition.

Though the Indians were generally regarded as warlike in the early days, it must be granted that they received the first advances of the white man in a friendly manner and did not take up arms until they saw clearly that either their visitors or themselves must be driven from the soil which was their own, the fee of which was derived from the Great Spirit. Deep pathos is revealed in this struggle, for that nation is yet to be found that will not fight for its home, the graves of its fathers, and its family altars. The Indians did not know the value of the land nor understand the true meaning of the treaties which took it from them; nor did they have a historian to relate their side of the story. In many instances the atrocities recorded against them were never committed: it was the policy of writers and those in authority among the whites not only to magnify Indian crimes, but sometimes, when they were wanting, to draw upon the imagination for accounts of such deeds of ferocity and blood as might best serve to keep alive the strongest feelings of indignation against the helpless Indian as an excuse to take his lands.¹ Such exaggerated tales of Indian horrors spread

¹Stone, William L., *Life of Joseph Brant—Thayendanegea, including the Indian Wars of the American Revolution*, Vol. I, p. xvi (New York, 1838); Kinzie, Mrs. John H., *Wau-Bun, the Early Day in the Northwest*, pp. 493-95 (New York, 1856); Dunn, Jacob P., *True Indian Stories . . .*, pp. 241-42 (Indianapolis, 1909); Stuart, Benjamin F., "Deportation of Menominee and his Tribe of Pottawattomie Indians," in *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 18, pp. 257-58; Drake, Benjamin, *The Life and Adventures of Black Hawk . . .*, pp. 95-107 (Cincinnati, 1839); Catlin, George, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians . . .*, Vol. I, p. 3 (London, 1841).

panic and were often used by the first settlers to keep others from encroaching upon the claims they were so eager to hold for themselves and their children.²

A letter written by a militia leader in 1832 from White Pigeon, St. Joseph County, Michigan, reads:

The injury done to this part of the territory by the exaggerated reports of danger from the hostile bands of Indians will not be cured for two years to come, and the unnecessary movements of our militia are calculated to spread far and near this alarm.³

Isaac McCoy, a Baptist minister sent by the government to the Potawatomi in accordance with the Treaty of 1821, claims that the Indians were neither strongly predisposed to the pursuit of hunting nor of war, and that it is a great mistake to believe the contrary. He further states:

If the Indians are a warlike people, they are made so by extraneous causes, and not hereditarily. But the Indians are *not a warlike people*. The whole history of our settlements in America, and of our operations in forcing them from their countries, to which they were strongly attached, shows that they were not a warlike people.⁴

Pitezel, another missionary, writes that "in extenuation of the cruelty of the Indians toward others, it may be stated that they have seldom been the aggressors, and have often suffered much before they have sought for revenge."⁵

As true children of the forest they lacked initiative, also the balance and poise which centuries of civilization had given to the white man, but from the first they were generous and hospitable. In November, 1682, a ship arrived at West Jersey with three hundred and sixty passengers; "their provisions being nigh gone, they sent ten miles to an Indian town near Rankokus creek, for Indian corn and pease." The chief of the tribe treated them kindly and directed the Indians who had

²Cox, Sandford C., *Recollections of the Early Settlement of the Wabash Valley*, pp. 51-53 (Lafayette, 1860); *History of St. Joseph County Indiana* . . ., p. 133 (Chicago, 1880); McDonald, Daniel, *A Twentieth Century History of Marshall County Indiana*, Vol. I, p. 24 (Chicago, 1908); Millard, A. L., "Historical Sketch of Lenawee County," in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. I, pp. 234-35.

³Quoted in Fuller, George N., *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan* . . ., p. 60 (Lansing, Mich., 1916).

⁴McCoy, Isaac, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* . . ., p. 21 (New York, 1840).

⁵Pitezel, John H., *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life* . . ., p. 404 (Cincinnati, 1857).

provisions to bring them in. This was done; plenty was received, and the Indians carried their contribution down to the canoes for them.⁶

David McKee, speaking of the Indians, said: "They always feed the hungry without regard to pay. In a natural state they are models of benevolence."⁷ George Catlin, after living with them eight years, said: "I feel bound to pronounce them by nature, a kind and hospitable people."⁸ Lanman in his *History of Michigan* said: "In their dispositions the Indians of the lakes are peaceable, and they will meet you in the forest with the French words of salutation, *Bon Jour.*"⁹

McCoy tells how Leopold Pokagon, though having meager supplies, shared them with McCoy's family, and how

an old Putawatomie widow, our nearest neighbour, who had herself not a particle of any thing to eat except her small stock of corn and beans, sent the family sweet corn enough for a plentiful meal for our whole family

Our kind widow had a few days before given information of our scarcity to some of the neighbouring Indians, and on this same day four other women and a boy brought us, on their backs, about three bushels of potatoes.

A few days later, McCoy states that "two Indians brought us about two bushels of corn."¹⁰

The Soul of the Indian, by Dr. Charles A. Eastman, Timothy H. Ball's *Northwestern Indiana from 1800 to 1900*, and Stone's *Life of Brant* are enlightening and edifying accounts of the true nature of the native Americans of whom Benjamin Franklin said, "Savages we call them because their manners differ from ours." William Penn's treaty with the Indians was sacredly kept for more than forty years and is a splendid example of fair and honest dealings, typical of the original settlers of this country.

Mrs. C. Gordon Ball, whose father, George Winter, lived

⁶Smith, Samuel, *The History of the Colony of Nova-Caesaria, or New-Jersey . . .*, p. 151 (Burlington, N. J., 1777).

⁷Quoted in Blanchard, Rufus, *The Discovery and Conquests of the Northwest . . .*, p. 371 (Chicago, 1880).

⁸Catlin, *North American Indians*, Vol. I, pp. 9-10.

⁹Lanman, James H., *History of Michigan, Civil and Topographical . . .*, p. 310 (New York, 1839).

¹⁰McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, p. 182.

with the Wabash Valley Potawatomi and painted many valuable pictures depicting Indian life and customs, tells how interesting, kind, and hospitable her father always found them. The writer's experience has strengthened this impression; everyone approached in the preparation of this work has been very kind, courteous, and willing to give information, lend clippings and pictures, or aid in every possible way. This is especially true of Mrs. Julia Pokagon Quingo, granddaughter of Chief Simon Pokagon.

On many occasions Chief Leopold Pokagon proved himself to be a true friend and a good neighbor to the white race. He made a determined effort to keep his people peaceable and quiet after the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Unlike many of the aborigines, he wisely chose to imitate the virtues of the white man instead of succumbing to his vices. He guarded his tribesmen against the dreaded "fire-water," and in no place in the Indian Agency ledgers of Colonel L. M. Taylor do we find the chief or his sons charged with the troublesome drink. Deeply religious, he aided and encouraged the early missionaries in every possible way and made a determined effort to Christianize the members of his band. On two occasions he built the first church in a community. During a council held at Carey Mission, May 22, 1832, with General Joseph W. Brown, Pokagon said: "I am a professor of religion, and anxious for all my brethren to join me; and am anxious to be at peace with all men."¹¹

Though grieving sorely, Pokagon left his cherished and picturesque village peacefully, within the time stipulated in the Chicago Treaty of 1833. Simon, his youngest child, carried on his father's work and gave his entire life as mediator for his race and in service to the priests who were helping them.

There are many records of Indian faithfulness to the white men: not a few proved to be trusty guides and helpers in the wars; so numerous are the tributes and recorded deeds of kindness chronicled by the early missionaries and pioneers who

¹¹Pokagon, Simon, *Ogi-mäw-kivě Mit-i-gwä-kî* (*Queen of the Woods*) . . ., p. 249 (Hartford, Mich., 1899).

knew the original savage, that one is forced to conclude that Pokagon was not altogether an exception.

Of the few Lake Shore Potawatomi remaining today, respected and treated well by their white neighbors, all are earning their own livelihood and proving themselves industrious citizens. Pitezel, the missionary, thinks there was a want of opportunity to develop their existing talents,¹² and Esarey claims: "They have taken on enough of the white man's thrift and culture to convince anyone that the whole tribe might, under more fortunate circumstances, have been saved to civilization."¹³

In this sketch no effort has been made to embellish or gloss over defects by overemphasizing virtues. Numerous contemporary quotations have been used in support of the authenticity of the study; they emphasize the worth of the two extraordinary aborigines whose lives are herein sketched.

Without the aid and courtesies extended by the authorities at the University of Notre Dame this story would have been incomplete and lacking in the proof that ties it to the vague annals and the silent shores of the receding past. Much credit is due to The Very Reverend James A. Burns, C. S. C., Provincial of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in the United States, who read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

¹²Pitezel, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life*, p. 400.

¹³Esarey, Logan, *A History of Indiana*, Vol. I, p. 385 (Fort Wayne, 1924).

THE POTAWATOMI OF THE LAKE SHORE

The Potawatomi, often called the "Canoe Men" by the Indians and early explorers, were first found living on the west shore of Lake Huron. When the Iroquois swept over their territory, they sought temporary refuge at Sault Ste. Marie, and from there many migrated south and located on the islands at the entrance to Green Bay. Here they first came in contact with the Jesuit missionaries who found them well disposed toward the Faith. About 1680 they began moving farther south and established themselves on the St. Joseph River in territory formerly held by the Miami. They came in large numbers and soon spread over a vast area stretching from the vicinity of Chicago northward to the mouth of the Kalamazoo River, eastward to include the headwaters of the Grand River, and southward into Indiana and Illinois.¹

The Catholic missionaries did not neglect the Potawatomi in their new home. We have evidence that a resident mission was contemplated on the St. Joseph River as early as 1686,² and it is commonly stated that Father Claude Allouez established a mission there two years later.³ However, the Reverend George Paré claims the statement rests more upon inference than upon evidence.⁴ In 1690 Father Claude Aveneau was sent to the St.

¹Hodge, Frederick W. (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, Vol. 2, pp. 289-90 (Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin* 30, Washington, 1910); Lanman, *History of Michigan*, p. 308; Thwaites, Reuben G. (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents. Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, Vol. 55, p. 183 (Cleveland, 1896-1901); Kellogg, Louise Phelps, *The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest*, pp. 70, 87, 94, 95, 176, 271 (Madison, Wis., 1925).

²Margry, Pierre, *Découvertes et Établissements des Français . . .*, Vol. 5, p. 35 (Paris, 1876-86).

³Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, Vol. 1, p. 884; Shea, John Gilmary, *History of the Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States. 1529-1854*, p. 375 (New York, 1855).

⁴Paré, George, "The St. Joseph Mission," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 17, pp. 27-32. Dr. Milo M. Quaife and Father Paré edited the Baptismal Register of the St. Joseph Mission. It is published in *ibid.*, Vol. 13, pp. 201-39.

Joseph Mission,⁵ and from that time on there is a fairly definite record of the various priests who worked there.

The site of the mission has never been accurately determined but it was probably the same as that noted by Charlevoix in 1721. From his description the location would be from one to three miles south of the present city of Niles, Michigan. He also states that the Miami had a village on one side of the river and the Potawatomi one on the other side, and that the chapel was on the Potawatomi side. Fort St. Joseph was also on that side.⁶

In 1712 Father Marest reported the mission as being in a splendid condition and the most important of all the missions on the lake excepting that at Michilimackinac.⁷ This flourishing condition meant, no doubt, that the Potawatomi were favorably inclined toward religious instruction.

The Potawatomi were well advanced in civilization, though they bore the marked characteristics of the Algonquian race of which they were a part. They were brave and hardy warriors, sanguinary, cruel and implacable as enemies, often treacherous as many of the American Indians were at this period of our history. On the other hand they were often steadfast and faithful friends as they notably proved themselves to be toward the French in the spring of 1712 when the garrison at Detroit was attacked.⁸

After 1721 the mission began to decline. In 1764 the Jesuits were recalled from America in accordance with a French decree and the history of St. Joseph as a mission was practically ended. The inhabitants of the community witnessed many turbulent events during the next few years. The British victory over the

⁵Ferland, Jean Baptiste, *Cours d'Histoire du Canada*, Vol. 2, p. 336 (Quebec, 1865).

⁶Beeson, L. H., "Fort St. Joseph," in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. 27, pp. 179-86; McCoy, Daniel, "Old Fort St. Joseph," in *ibid.*, Vol. 35, pp. 545-52; Hinsdale, Wilbert B., *Archaeological Atlas of Michigan*, Map 4 (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1931).

⁷Copley, A. B., "The Potawatomi," in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. 14, p. 258.

⁸Lanman, *History of Michigan*, pp. 44-46; Roy, Pierre-Georges, *Sieur de Vincennes Identified*, pp. 44-71 (*Indiana Historical Society Publications*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Indianapolis, n. d.).

French in the Seven Years War brought the western posts under British command. In 1781 the Spanish launched an expedition against Fort St. Joseph and captured it. Following the American Revolution and the War of 1812 the United States established their control over the region.

In 1822 the Baptist mission of Isaac McCoy was established one mile west of the present city of Niles. This was in fulfillment of a provision in the treaty made at Chicago the preceding year. The Potawatomi granted the United States one mile square of land on condition that certain improvements and appropriations of money be made for their educational interests and for other purposes. By arrangement with the Baptist Board of Missions, the Reverend Isaac McCoy was to serve in the twofold capacity of missionary and government agent, the Board to pay part of the expenses.

The St. Joseph Valley had been practically abandoned as a missionary field for nearly half a century after the Jesuits were withdrawn. Yet, through all that time, these children of the forest preserved the Faith as transmitted by the Jesuit Fathers. McCoy relates how, "supposing it would please us, they frequently told us that they still recollected portions of prayers which they had been taught, and two or three old persons told us that 'they had had water put on their faces,' as they expressed it."⁹

McCoy describes the poverty and wretched condition of the Indians, and the shocking, degrading influence of the whiskey which the traders had brought among them. One story he relates would lead us to believe that the Potawatomi of that day were as superstitious as were their ancestors of Marquette's and La Salle's time. About four hundred of the St. Joseph Indians had started on the slow, tiresome journey to the treaty council held on the Mississinewa River in 1826. During the first three days they became very weakened and exhausted as they failed to capture any game. On the third night one of the chiefs had a dream in which he was told that the reason

⁹McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, p. 237.

they had been unsuccessful in hunting was because Chebass, one of the chiefs, had neglected to make a sacrificial feast before they started, and then he was told how they were to proceed to propitiate the Deity. The next morning the one who had the dream gave detailed instructions as to how the hunt was to proceed and the hunters were rewarded by capturing four deer. A general halt was called and a wonderful feast was indulged in by all excepting Chebass, for as the feast was considered his it was necessary for him to fast until the sun had gone down. In accordance with instructions, during the remaining days of their journey they were very successful in the hunt and had plenty of food.¹⁰

Another incident related by McCoy describes an Indian festival in the summer of 1825 and mentions the aged war chief Topenebee. He was the ranking war chief of the tribe for a long period and represented the Potawatomi at the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Though a man of ability and a brave and cunning warrior, he became an abject slave to whiskey. At the Treaty of Chicago, when Lewis Cass advised him to keep sober if possible so he could secure a good bargain for himself and for his people, his characteristic reply was, "Father, we do not care for the land, nor the money, nor the goods: what we want is whiskey; give us whiskey!"¹¹

His degradation was pathetic and finally, in the latter part of July, 1826, McCoy writes that while under the influence of liquor he fell from his horse and was so injured that he died two days later.¹²

¹⁰McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, pp. 305-6.

¹¹Quoted in Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, Vol. 2, p. 785.

¹²McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, p. 286. It is commonly stated that Topenebee lived until 1840, but David R. Leeper, in the *South Bend Times* of March 3, 1898, states that McCoy is correct and that it was the old chief's son of the same name who signed the treaties in 1828, 1832, and 1833. Father Badin, in a letter of June 9, 1832, mentions Topenebee as about twenty-eight years of age and chief of the whole Potawatomi nation. In another letter written on June 20 of the same year Father Badin again refers to young Topenebee and calls him the principal chief.

LEOPOLD POKAGON

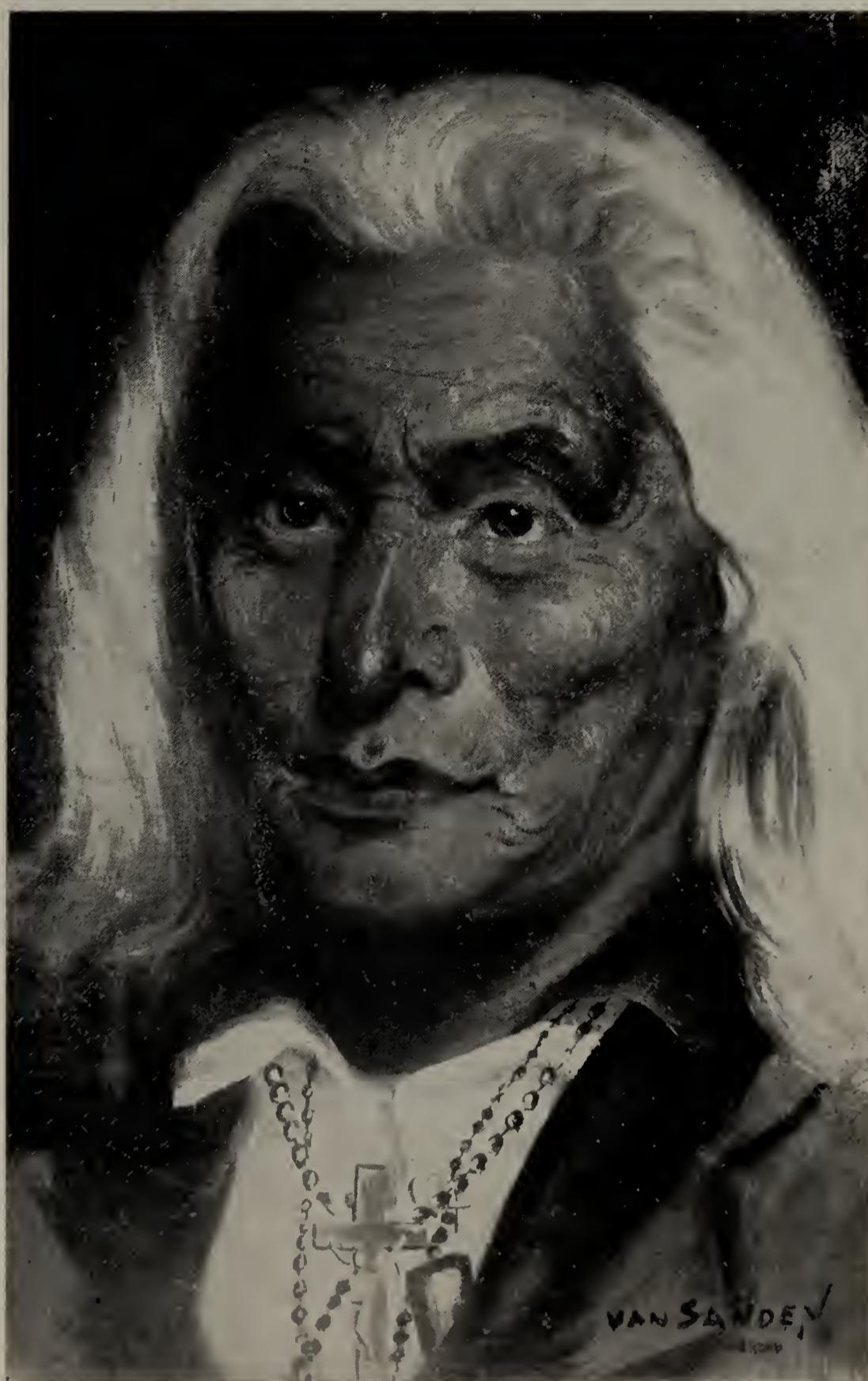
Leopold Pokagon was the civil chief of first rank in the Potawatomi tribe. Tradition claims that he was not a Potawatomi by birth, but a Chippewa who had been captured by Zawnk, a war leader under the great Chief Doopnubii, in a war of extermination in the West, and had been presented to Topenebee as a slave. The name Pokagon is really Pugegun and means a rib. When captured he was wearing a rib from one of his Potawatomi victims on his war bonnet, in place of the customary eagle feather, to show his contempt for the Potawatomi in general. Hence the origin of the name given to him by his captors. He was soon regarded as stern, courageous, and brave, and was accordingly adopted into the tribe. He married a daughter of Sawawk, the brother of Topenebee.¹

Each important chief had a separate village. That of Pokagon was located in what is now the southeast part of Bertrand Township, Berrien County, not far from the Old Sauk Trail and about six miles north and west of the present city of South Bend.² On a high knoll in section 22, not far from the west bank of the St. Joseph River, is the Indian cemetery where some of Pokagon's people are buried. Mr. Copp, the present owner of the land, always regarded the spot as sacred and would not permit its cultivation. The tall standard of the cedar cross which marked the site still stands. Until quite recently a carving of 1807 could be seen on it.³

¹Fox, George R., "Place Names of Berrien County," in *Michigan History Magazine*, Vol. 8, p. 35; Ellis, F., *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, Michigan*, p. 33 (Chicago, 1880).

²Hodge (ed.), *North American Indians*, Vol. 2, p. 274; maps of Indiana and Michigan in Royce, Charles C., *Indian Land Cessions in the United States* (*Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1896-97, part 2, plates 27 and 37, Washington, 1899); map in Royce, "Cessions of Land by Indian Tribes to the United States: illustrated by those in the state of Indiana," in *First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1879-80, pp. 249-62 (Washington, 1881).

³Bartlett, Charles H., *Tales of Kankakee Land*, pp. 216-17, 221 (New York, 1907).



CHIEF LEOPOLD POKAGON

[From a painting in the possession of the Northern Indiana Historical Society, South Bend, Indiana. Painted in 1838.]

Nothing remains of the village today except a few fragments of the old stone steps which were at the entrance to the log church, but viewing the old location one easily realizes the wisdom of the choice. Hidden from the highway, on a gentle rising hill at the head of Pokagon Creek, they were in very truth monarchs of all and undisturbed in their forest home.

McCoy's account of Pokagon's Village is an interesting and enlightening record.

Pocagin, a Putawatomie chief, and his party, had commenced a village about six miles from the mission, and manifested a disposition to make themselves more comfortable. It was one of our places of preaching. In the spring of 1826, we were about to afford them some assistance in making improvements, when one of those white men that are commonly hanging about the Indians, for the sake of flaying them, like crows around a carcass, interfered, and made a contract for making improvements. This ended in disappointment to the Indians. Pocagin again applied to us, and in November we hired white men to erect for them three hewed log cabins, and to fence twenty acres of prairie land. The Indians promised to pay them, and for the payment we became security. We saw that justice was done to the Indians in regard to price and the good performance of the work and we subsequently employed our team and hands to plough up the new prairie land for them. We also presented to them some stock hogs, and loaned them a milch cow for their encouragement to raise stock.⁴

The so-called villages of the local tribes were simply groups of huts disposed without order and without plan. There were no shelters for stock or outbuildings of any sort. Their huts were known as wigwams and were usually frail frameworks of poles covered with bark, flags, or mats with strings of bark or hide to hold the parts in place. The lodge or tepee of the prairie and plains, set up cone-shaped with tanned skins sewed together into a single piece for a covering, seems not to have been adopted by the forest Indians, although they also used the central fireplace. McCoy describes one of the better class that he saw on the St. Joseph.

The wigwam composed of flags was circular, about ten feet in diameter, and about seven feet high in the centre. The smoke from the fire in the middle of the hut escaped through an opening above. The door was closed by a deer skin attached to the upper part.⁵

The season of occupancy lasted about half the year. During this time the villagers were occupied with their agricultural

⁴McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, p. 292.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 139.

pursuits and various amusements, and a more noisy, jolly gathering could scarcely be imagined. But throughout the winter hunting season the villages were wholly deserted, and presented a far different aspect. McCoy writes:

The dreariness of those places in winter can hardly be conceived by one who has not visited them: not an individual is to be seen about them, nor any domestic animals, nor any thing which is to be employed for the future use of the unsettled owners, on their return at the commencement of warm weather.⁶

Though Pokagon and Isaac McCoy were on the most



VICINITY OF POKAGON VILLAGE

[×, Pokagon Village; +, first Catholic cemetery; √, La Salle's Landing. Fort St. Joseph was two and one-half miles north of Old Sauk Trail on river road.]

⁶McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, p. 329.

friendly terms and McCoy was preaching at Pokagon Village, the chief was far from being satisfied with these religious ministrations and his band were never persuaded to send their children to the school maintained by the Baptist mission.⁷

The Pokagons were particularly distinguished for their devotion to the traditional teachings of the Jesuit Fathers. They wanted a "Black-robe" and nothing else would satisfy them. The Indians of that region, in general, cherished a decided bias in the same direction. The priests were nearly always French and the Frenchmen have ever evinced, beyond all other nationalities, a peculiar fitness for winning and retaining the good will of the Indians, while the priests seemed to have found this tribe more tractable and easily managed than were most of the tribes of the Northwest. All the ceremonies of the Catholic Church attracted the Indians. The Bible alone could not suffice for them, for, as they said, that was not made for them; they could not read.

Two Sisters of Charity who were sent as missionaries to work with the St. Joseph Indians wrote:

I could not believe that such piety existed among them. On the contrary I always believed them to be a very barbarous people that had neither laws nor religion; but I am now convinced of their sincerity and simplicity.⁸

Lanman, visiting Michigan in 1837 and writing of the influence of the Catholic missionaries, said:

The spirit which was frequently exhibited by them, was not that which pines within iron bars and frowns on innocent enjoyment; not the religion which exhausts itself in forms and rubrics, in making professions and counting beads, a religion which showed itself in words rather than in action. But it was a spirit which softened the character and controlled the conduct, circulating through the whole moral system as the blood through the veins of the human body. It was a religion which waved its snow-white banner—emblazoned with the star that glowed with clear brilliancy upon the plains of Judea—above the strife of savage passions, and encountered hardships, trials, and even death itself, to benefit barbarians.⁹

During the time the St. Joseph Valley was without religious

⁷*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, Vol. 6, p. 158 (Quebec, 1822-44).

⁸Sisters Magdalene Jackson and Lucina Whitaker to Bishop John F. Rezé, February 4, 1834. Unpublished letter in Archives of Nazareth Academy, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

⁹Lanman, *History of Michigan*, p. xi.

influence or guidance except for the occasional visits of priests, the Indians taught each other and tried hard to preserve the religious influence they had previously enjoyed. McCoy tells about the zealously with which the Indians regarded the teachings of the Jesuit Fathers and describes their pilgrimages to Vincennes and Kaskaskia; some even went as far as Quebec to perform the Easter observances. Pokagon married one of his daughters to Alexander Mousse, a Catholic half-breed of Canada whose father was French and whose mother was an Indian of the Ottawa tribe.¹⁰ Mr. Mousse often spoke of his religion to the Potawatomi who were yet heathens and adored the Great Spirit whom they did not know.

Finally the Potawatomi of the St. Joseph Valley attracted the attention of the Reverend Gabriel Richard, vicar-general of the Bishop of Cincinnati. He sent Father John Frederic Rezé, who arrived in July, 1830.

As soon as the Pottawatomies knew that a Black-gown was really there, all began to gather around his cabin, pitching their tents hard by, not to lose his words. Many solicited baptism. All sought to show their desire to embrace the religion which had been preached to their fathers. Rezé baptized Pokagon, the head chief, and twelve others whose past conduct seemed to promise perseverance. At the end of the ceremony, they held a council to decide on a place for a chapel. They finally decided to ask the Baptist ministers stationed there to give up the mission-house to a Catholic missionary since the Baptists had decided to go with the Indians who were leaving for Kansas.

Father Rezé obtained a signed statement from four of the chiefs; then accompanied by Pokagon and some other savages they went to call at the mission, hoping to obtain possession of it. To get decently rid of Pokagon they promised to give up the place within a month but during that interval they were not idle and apprized the Government agent what was going on. Consequently, an order arrived for the Government agent to take possession of the establishment and the agent wrote to the Catholics . . . a letter threatening against whoever wished to make himself master, or even to advise the savages on this subject.¹¹

Catholic religious workers were so few and the field so large that Rezé's residence could not be permanent. He soon left and Pokagon was then inconsolable and journeyed to

¹⁰Probably Miss Nancy Pokagon. Both her name and Mr. Mousse's appear on Colonel Taylor's Indian Ledger. Mr. Mousse was an invaluable help to the early missionaries for whom he interpreted. He assisted Father Badin and was with Father Deseille when he died at the altar. He is buried in the Silver Creek Cemetery. Kelly, Rt. Rev. E. D., *Life of Father Baroux*, pp. 28, 40, 60. (Ann Arbor Press [1913]).

¹¹*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, Vol. 6, pp. 148, 159.

Detroit to intercede for another priest. All were moved by the earnestness of his appeal to Father Richard.

Father, Father, I come to beg you to give us a Black-gown to teach us the word of God. We are ready to give up whiskey and all our barbarous customs. Thou dost not send us a Black-gown, and thou hast often promised us one. What, must we live and die in our ignorance? If thou hast no pity on us men, take pity on our poor children who will live as we have lived, in ignorance and vice. We are left deaf and blind, steeped in ignorance, although we earnestly desire to be instructed in the faith. Father, draw us from the fire—the fire of the wicked manitou. An American minister wished to draw us to his religion, but neither I nor any of the village would send our children to his school, nor go to his meetings. We have preserved the way of prayer taught our ancestors by the Black-gown who used to be at St. Joseph. Every night and morning my wife and children pray together before a crucifix which thou hast given us, and on Sunday we pray oftener. Two days before Sunday we fast till evening, men, women and children, according to the tradition of our fathers and mothers, as we had never ourselves seen Black-gowns at St. Joseph.¹²

In answer to this plea Father Stephen T. Badin arrived in August, 1830. Twenty-four were soon enrolled for instruction and baptism.

Badin's first labor was to restore the prayers which had become, he found, greatly corrupted; too old to learn the language, he nevertheless began to take down from Pokagon's lips, the prayers and commandments as preserved by traditions. Pokagon and his wife, heirs of the Catholic traditions and virtues of the tribe, were his greatest consolation by their piety, zeal, and devotedness. All showed great docility and earnestness. Inspired by the zeal of the missionary, Pokagon wished in some way to become his coadjutor. Although of an advanced age, he learned the prayers and essential truths of religion with avidity and in a few weeks was able to give instruction to the more ignorant and to assist in many ways the efforts of the priest in preparing the Indians for baptism.¹³

Excerpts from Father Badin's letters will best tell the story of his work among the Pokagons.

I resolved to buy ground to restore the church establishment independent of any emergency. Having arrived on the spot it was easy for me to convince myself that unfortunately my fears were going to be realized, so with the aid of Divine Providence I have bought a house which I have consecrated to make a chapel, a 50 acre plot of ground two miles from the chapel, adjoining the Indian territory and the Hamlet of Pokagon. It is built in the Woods and has cost me only \$80. It is 25 feet long and about 19 feet wide and resembles a little the stable of Bethlehem.

The respectable Chief Pokagon is in charge of my chapel. He summons his band morning and evening for their prayers which they

¹²*Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 546.

¹³*Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 160.

Le vingt deux juillet mil huit cent trente, Mons^r Frédéric Reje, p^rê, alors visiteur du Michigan pour M^{gr} l'evêque de Cincinnati a baptisé

- 1 Théotis, sauvagesse, épouse de Daniel Bourassa jun. et mère de leurs enfants; à savoir
- 2 Marc, âgé de dix-neuf ans.
- 3 Jude, âgé de dix-sept ans.
- 4 Lazare, âgé de quinze ans.
- 5 Aikane, âgée de douze ans.
- 6 Gabriel, âgé de neuf ans.
- 7 Alexandre, âgé de six ans.
- 8 Daniel, âgé de trois ans.
- 9 Jacques, âgé d'un an.

Les parrains et marraines inconnus

- 10 Léopold Pokégan, âgé de 55 ans, et Elizabeth, âgée de 46 ans.
- 11 Daniel Bourassa père et Marguerite Bertrand sont leur parrain et marraine. Il leur a aussi donné la bénédiction nuptiale, apparemment devant les mêmes personnes, les témoins ne ayant pas été mentionnés.
- 12 François Ketchouanno, âgé de quatre ans.
- 13 Jean Baptiste Pokégan, âgé de neuf ans.
- 14 Pierre Sagorma, âgé de deux ans

Ces trois enfants sont nés des susdits Léopold & Elizabeth. Les parrains et marraines sont inconnus.

- 15 Monique Mitané-koy, âgée de quatorze ans, fille de Kaka-tchic et de Kita-pino-koy. Les parrain et marraine inconnus.
- 16 Louis Pitchic, âgé de soixante dix ans. Joseph et Magdeleine Bertrand sont ses parrain et marraine

17 Paul Moa-ouë, âgé de sept ans, fils de (feu) Cikiché et de Cénokoy Pokégan.
Les parrain et marraine inconnus.

18 Françoise, âgée de huit ans, fille de Kaka-ké-chi et de (feue) Pit-tah, nièce d'Elizabeth Pokégan. Parrain et marraine inconnus.

19 Cécile, âgée de neuf ans, fille de Koy-guenn et de (feue) Panokoy, fille de Pokégan. Parrain et marraine inconnus.

20 Catherine, âgée de dix ans, fille de Koy-Scet et de (feue) Ké-ou-ah, nièce d'Elizabeth Pokégan. Parrain et marraine inconnus

Le vingt-cinq juillet, même année, Mons^r Rézé a baptisé trois enfants nés
du légitime mariage de François Bajet et de Célestine Reed: 1^o Michel, âgé de quatre
ans. 2^o Magdeleine, née le trente avril 1830. 3^o Antoine, né le 7. Janv. 1828.
Leurs parrain et marraine sont Joseph et Thérèse Bertrand

24 Trois enfants de Louis et de Adélaïde Osché-ouë: 1^o Françoise, âgée
25 de quatre ans. 2^o Antoine, âgé de trois ans. 3^o Joseph, âgé d'un an. Leurs parrain
26 et marraine sont Laurent Bertrand et Thérèse McGulpin.

27 Marie Sanamo-koy, âgée de 68 ans, veuve d'un chef. Daniel et
Marguerite Bourassa sont ses parrain et marraine.

28 Marie, âgée de 24 ans. Puis, elle a reçu la bénédiction nuptiale avec
Joseph Bertrand. Mais ni les témoins, ni le parrain ni la marraine ne me sont
connus.

29 Joseph Hamilton Bertrand, âgé de deux ans, fils des susdits Joseph et
Marie Bertrand. Parrain et marraine inconnus.

30 Marie Mati-to-koy, âgée de 50 ans, femme de Kyo-sac-koy, son époux.
frère. Sa marraine est Marguerite Bourassa.

Mariette ^{épouse}

Steph. Thos. Badin
U. de Baedt. & Cie.

attend with a respect, an attention and a modesty that is hardly found amongst us, if not at the home of the religious and the really pious persons. Their calm appearance, simple and mild, the look of innocence and the kindness which shines on their faces, is not at all in accord with the idea that we ordinarily have of the Indians.

Accustomed to a hard life, they fear neither the penance nor the fasting which all impose upon themselves voluntarily, even the infidels, for to honor the Master of Life and to invoke quite ordinarily their Manitous, their spirits or their demons who manifest their will through dreams. Many took the bad spirit rather than the good or great spirit, because the latter, they said, certainly would do them no harm, but they fear the others very much and their offering of the sacrifices is to appease them and to turn them away from doing evil.

They are inclined to go to confess, although they cannot do it without an interpreter; they receive all the consolations and the instructions in the sacred tribunal. During my absence they wished to confess to my interpreter who is a very pious woman, also zealous for their salvation as she instructs in the religion and eloquently expresses herself on all that which concerns the faith, the customs, the ceremonies and the discipline of the church. She is 68 years old and she has spent more than thirty at the school of my venerable friend, Father Richard. I do not know of a priest more industrious, more penitent, more patient, more learned, more genuinely pious than she is in all this country. We never omit religious duties at the rising and the setting of the sun, then we teach reading every day to all whom we can collect. Miss Liquette, old as she is, does the same every day after mass. Her activity is equal to her charity and zeal. It is a subject of admiration for me to hear her, and to notice the powerful impression her discourses make on the hearers. They are catechized every day after mass. Miss Campaux also wins the respect of all the Indians for her piety and the zeal with which she fills all the work that she is giving for the progress of the religion with the Indians.

One day when I was hearing confession at Pokagon's home, I observed, during a moment of relaxation, that he was preparing to leave the house. I said to him, smiling, you are going away, so it appears; are you afraid to go to confess? "God Forbid," responded he very seriously. "I hate sin too much to fear confession which destroys the sin." He is a man full of good sense, of an honest heart, of a good memory and whose natural eloquence, with the gestures and the voice of an orator, is such that I have seen a number of Indians, attentive, grave and silent during more than an hour when he is addressing them on religion. Pokagon is constantly at work for both soul and body; he is truly a Christian orator and understands and practices well his religion and is much respected by all his American neighbors.

After having had a long visit and said the prayer with me, he has had enough natural talent to compose, without any assistance, a tune resembling our chant, and to which he has adapted the Creed and the Decalogue, in order to teach it more agreeably to his family and his neighbors; He is about 55 years old and only three years ago he began to change his views towards religion, having always lived very far from a priest, since Father Richard lived 180 miles from his village. It is due to his wife that the spark of faith is preserved here despite the destruction of the Jesuits whose instructions she was never able to receive being only 45 years old. So it is that she has received the baptism and nuptial blessing only last year through the ministry of Father Rezé. Today both are humanized and sanctified by religion in a manner that

astonishes all those who have known them before. It seems that a natural instinct or good judgment also teaches them that the Holy Spirit and Faith comes with the hearing since they cannot read.

Chief Pokagon had lost six or seven children long before he had any idea about religion. However, touched by all these ravages of death, he secretly made the resolution to fast in order to appease the Great Spirit, the Master of Life, to whom he also regularly addressed prayers of his own fashion, inasmuch as he was ignorant of even the Lord's Prayer. During four entire years he continued his fast every day, even on Sundays the same in spite of the extraordinary fatigue of the chase, though he knew not. Since that time he has received but one child so to make up for that he has adopted eight orphans and three widows. Although our charitable Chief Pokagon had scarcely enough wheat to feed until Christmas Day the 22 persons of his family and the many visitors who besiege us to be instructed in the faith, Jacques, a sick young man seventeen years of age, was welcomed to stay with me. The savages make many days journey, it does not matter the time, the snow or the rain, to receive religious information.

During all the time of my sojourn near them, I have lived with Chief Pokagon. I have spent with great satisfaction many days and nights in his cabin, lying on a mat and eating with a good appetite his boiled corn and beef. What makes this kind of life bearable is to see the attention and the docility of these good folks, the fervor and the modesty with which they pray, the humility and the simplicity of these men of thirty, forty years or more, who come morning and evening from their huts to kneel down at the feet of their chief, to learn their prayers like the children.

If one could know the good savages that I have the happiness of instructing, one would be able to defend and to love them. When they renounce in baptism all the splendor of Satan, I ask myself at the same time, where should they find it? Their language does not furnish the words to curse or blaspheme. All these vices which dishonor our village and our country are naturally few in the men. After all they have not the money to corrupt themselves. You know the charm of their piety, so naive, so true; their modesty and their silence in the church, their attention at the catechism and at the exhortation of the priests proclaiming their sentiments of respect for the Master of Life, the fear and the love with which their friends are searching for Him. As I do not baptize them until after sufficient proof, I am very sure of their fidelity to complete their promises made to God, so that their life is truly Christian and worthy of the frequent communion to which I admit them willingly to maintain charity in them, and to increase their fervour and their gratitude for the gift of faith which they have had the honor of receiving preferably to all of the other savages and to other people who are surrounding us.

Many other reasons attach me to them; I do not find in the wigwams vices uncommon in the palaces and in the cities; I find on the contrary here, virtues unknown to civilized people and even in greater numbers of Christians. The savages observe to the letter by virtue or by inclination this lesson of the Saviour: "Be not anxious for the morrow," for they haven't that avarice which is idolatry worship, as St. Paul said. They have not the ambition for honors, nor the taste for unholy pleasures. One finds no display in their furnishings nor on their tables; no flattery upon their lips, no hypocrisy in their devotions, no weariness or inattention to the sermon, no thoughtlessness, or conversation, curiosity,

or vanity at church. They have much respect for the priests, and all of this belongs to godlike worship. They are patient, generous, hospitable, charitable, and in reality more chaste, although in appearance much less modest than the Americans and the French in their manners and their dress.

The chimney in my cabin smokes so much that it sometimes extinguishes the fire; then the floor is so badly joined, also the door, that we have wind passing in abundantly. The roof is half open in many places and today is covered with a foot of snow which protects us against the cold, but in time of rain or thaw we submit to a strong dribbling, and sometimes to showers. My bed was a mat and a few covers; in September I finally obtained a straw bed, still I enjoyed it not two nights. To practice hospitality I gave it to a friend who has passed many months at the village. My table is a bench four feet long and ten thumbs high; it is little, but sufficient for two persons who have but one dish to put there. Sometimes we are without food when the hunt has not been good, then we have recourse to the mush or beans; it's the same when we need bread, but always in one way or another we live by the Grace of God. I enjoy myself very much, I never looked better and I have never been more content because God in His Mercy gave me the grace of not laboring in vain.¹⁴

In spite of the fact that Father Badin was so destitute he had not even an altar stone on which to say mass, the work of conversion progressed. By January he counted three hundred Christians, all of whom confessed regularly. Because of the care he exercised before receiving them into the Church, the influence of the converts was soon felt, and many desirous of renouncing their dissolute habits came to ask instruction and baptism. That Father Badin was fully engrossed in this work and always admired the Pokagon band of Potawatomi is shown by the many complimentary allusions he made to them and by the fact that he resented their being called "savages." In his letters he makes frequent mention of their honesty, sincerity, and "admirable patience" under the treatment accorded them by the white settlers, and says that the "spirit of piety has brought forth also industry in many who are marvelling at the prospects offered by their cornfields which are more luxuriant than even those of their American neighbors."

In reporting to Bishop Edward Fenwick in October, 1832, Father Badin relates the following incident:

On the 9th day of last June 1832 a man named Topinabe, about twenty-five years of age, chief of the whole Poutouatamy nation, in a drunken fit killed Nanako, a man justly esteemed. The murderer

¹⁴*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, Vol. 4, p. 546, Vol. 6, pp. 154, 165.

surrendered himself at a Council held at Carey on the 11th of June, and looked with resignation for punishment from the drawn glittering knives of the brothers and friends of Nanako. A sinister silence followed after some peaceful speeches of Pokagon. My interpreter, an old lady of 68 years of age, Madame Campaux, much respected and beloved by the Indians, after many unsuccessful attempts to avert a vengeance, which probably would have provoked many other murders, disarmed the men by generously offering her own life in these words, addressed to the sullen and indignant brothers of the deceased. "Kill me, I stand here to be killed in lieu of Topinabe." The brother, stunned by this unexpected effort of charity, consented to delay inflicting the deadly blow and having been also brought by the agent [Colonel Stewart], from the council to a private conversation, he resolved to refer the decision to a certain chief, his near relative, and to a pretended prophet on the Wabash who gave a bloody answer.¹⁵ But before coming to the dreaded execution, several long talks were held with me, when I made it so sensible that the prophet was not the Son of God, as he pretended to be that they laughed at his impostures and at their own credulity. Finally a council was held on the 29th of June, to whom I addressed the following letter and it was agreed that Topinabe would be redeemed by making certain presents to the family of the deceased and all the red with some white brethren contributed to assist the chief in paying the price of his redemption. It may be remarked here that Topinabe has come to me on the 17th of June and falling on his knees promised me in the presence of God to drink no more whiskey, and he has been faithful to his promise.

He inclosed the letter which he had sent to the Indians upon this occasion. The closing paragraph was as follows:

One word more: open your ears—no man, by killing Topinabe, your Chief, could restore Nanankoy to life, nor give happiness to his soul in the other world; but great mischief would be done by adding sorrow to sorrow, and tears to tears. I, your father, am confident that all wise men among your white friends will say that what I am writing here to my children of the Poutouatamy nation is right and true. May the Great Spirit bless you all!

STEPHEN THEODORE BADIN,
Makateconia.¹⁶

The Belgian missionary, Father Louis Deseille, followed Father Badin in 1833. Pokagon quickly understood and appreciated the merit and virtue of this new priest and at once began aiding him in all possible ways.

¹⁵Father Badin probably refers here to Kanakuk, a Kickapoo prophet who counted many of the Potawatomi among his disciples. See Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, Vol. 1, p. 650; Mooney, James, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (*Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology . . .*, 1892-93, part 2, pp. 692-700, Washington, 1896).

¹⁶The draft of this letter used for the quotation is in the Notre Dame Archives. A revised form was apparently sent to Bishop Fenwick and is published in *American Catholic Historical Researches*, New Series, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 23-24 (January, 1908).

Pokagon's little log church was the first to be erected in Bertrand Township, Berrien County, Michigan.¹⁷ Though chronicles of the early days are few, the little log church which occupied a commanding place on the high hill in a clearing of the large oak forest has often been mentioned in the reminiscences of pioneers and the accounts of travelers. Dr. Simon Gabriel Bruté, first bishop of Vincennes, visited this region in 1835 and left an account of his tour from which the following excerpt is taken.

From Chicago we went around the end of Lake Michigan to the River St. Joseph and the mission of the Rev. Mr. De Seille at the Indian Village of Pokegan, situated just outside of our Diocese and in that of Detroit. This mission was established many years ago by the venerable Mr. Badin. Mr. De Seille has lived for three or four years at Pokegan's Village. He has there and in the neighbourhood more than 650 Catholic Indians baptized [probably including the other stations visited by De Seille]. A large number of their huts are built around the Chapel, which is constructed of bark with a Cross erected behind and rising above it, and filled with rudely made benches. The Indians begin and end their work without hammer, saw, or nails; the axe being their only implement, and bits of skin or bark serving to fasten the pieces together. The room of the missionary is over the Chapel, the floor of the one forming the ceiling of the other. A ladder in the corner leads to it, and his furniture consists, as did the prophet's, of a table and chair, and a bed, or rather a hammock swung on ropes. Around the room are his books, and the trunks which contain the articles used in the Chapel, as well as his own apparel. He spends his life with his good people, sharing their corn and meat, with water for his drink, and tea made from the herbs of his little garden. He abjures all spirits, as all the Catholic Indians are forbidden to touch that which is the bane of their race, and he would encourage them by his example. I attended at the evening Catechism, Prayers, and Canticles, and in the morning said Mass, at which a large number assisted.¹⁸

David R. Leeper interviewed several persons who attended church at the chapel. Among them was Nathaniel Hamilton, of Buchanan, Michigan, whose exceptional opportunities coupled with his clear memory, render him an authority rarely found in such cases. Mr. Hamilton said in substance:

Came to South Bend with my father, Alanson Hamilton and other members of the family in June, 1834. Saw the Pokagon Village that season. We moved to what is now known as the James Badger farm, near the village, in April, 1835, my father having selected and marked this claim in 1833. Was at the Pokagon Village many times. We hauled

¹⁷Coolidge, O. W., *History of Berrien County, Michigan*, p. 207 (Chicago, 1906).

¹⁸Quoted in Bayley, James R., *Memoirs of the Right Reverend Simon Wm. Gabriel Bruté . . .*, pp. 83-85 (New York, 1876).



Courtesy Chas. Scribners' Sons.

POKAGON'S WAGON

our water from the Pokagon spring. I often sold milk and bread to the chief's family, and their children were my playmates. Thought the chief a most excellent man. His cabin was on the south side of the creek, a little southwest of the main spring. Squaw Village was back on the prairie, 80 to 100 rods westward of the square brick residence, west of the present road, and known as the Isaac Tripp place.

This village consisted of a number of miserable pole, bark, and other sorts of huts where the squaws lived in summer, planting and tilling their scanty crops of corn, potatoes, beans, squashes, pumpkins, etc. Corn was known as squaw corn, a white flinty variety, having an occasional blue grain in the ears. No team was used; hoe only implement used in preparing the ground and tilling the crop. Corn hills rounded up like old-fashioned sweet potato hills, and placed with utter disregard to rows or uniform distances apart. Went to church at chapel pretty regularly. Services generally once a month. Was the only place we could attend meetings conveniently. Priest tall and somewhat gray-haired. Chapel built of small round logs. French woman for interpreter.¹⁹

The site of the Pokagon chapel is still plainly distinguishable [1898]. A bare spot several rods in extent within a considerable patch of second growth oaks, indicates the place. In leveling for the foundation a bank about three feet high was cut on the north side. The boulders that supported the building were removed and put into the basement of the Keller barn in 1862, but depressions or pits in the surface about a foot deep, plainly show their former positions under the building. There are two rows of these pits, 26 feet apart, with four pits in each row, indicating a building about 26 feet wide and 56 feet long, the longer way extending east and west. It was doubtless, like the Chapel at Lake St. Mary's, a double log cabin of the usual design, with a porch running crosswise through the center. Similar pits show there was probably also, some sort of an attachment on the center of the south side. A red oak tree with the foundation area near the southeast corner girds four feet and ten inches, four feet from the ground, from which we may infer that the building ceased to be many years ago, probably at about the time the village was vacated. The spot is a most sightly one, being on the crest of an eminence overlooking a long sweep of the creek, flanked by winding ravines, and sloping away gracefully all around except at the rear where a narrow neck joins it to the level of the adjacent lands. It is about 150 paces from the large spring in the north prong of the creek which is here a mere string of bushy bogs.²⁰

"I remember old Chief Pokagon well," said the venerable Jacob Ritter in a conversation about early times in St. Joseph County.

I came to this part of the country in 1830. Pokagon then had his village down on the little creek just west and a little south of Bertrand near the "Old Sauk Trail." He was the head of a small band of Potawatomies and quite a man among the Indians. He delighted to

¹⁹Angélique Liquette. She died at Alexis Coquillard's in South Bend in 1837 or 1838 and was buried in the little Badin cemetery now bordering Angela Avenue, west of Dixie Way. Mrs. Alexis Coquillard took her place as interpreter for the priests, going from place to place on horseback. *South Bend News-Times*, March 15, 1898.

²⁰*Ibid.*, March 15, 1898.

show his importance as a chief and was very proud. I recollect well the first time I saw him. It was some kind of a festival day for the Catholics and as I was working on my farm a few miles west of the Indian Village on Portage Prairie, I saw coming along the trail . . . a queer looking outfit that would not fail to attract attention. Seated in a high wooden cart, drawn by a little pony was a big red man decked out with feathers in his hair and a gay colored blanket thrown about his shoulders. Following the chariot were a few plain Indians on foot. I knew of course, that this was some big man among the tribe and I watched with great interest his approach until he drew near to me.

When about twenty feet away he halted and stood bolt upright in his cart making one of the finest tableaux of an Indian Chief in full dress that I had ever seen. He said nothing and neither did I, as I was waiting for him to speak if he had anything to say and it seemed as if he was waiting for me to open the conversation. I didn't know but he expected me to come and salute him and help him down out of his carriage, but I did not feel like doing it. He did not show any signs of battle, nor did the other Indians who grouped around him when he stopped. I was not at all scared, but I could not make out what the fuss was for, so I just merely kept my eye on the big Indian in the cart and he kept his gaze firmly fixed on me. Finally, after he had stood there stiff . . . for a few minutes, he gradually drew his right arm from under his cloak, straightened to his full height, smote upon his breast two or three times and grunted out, "Me Pokagon, Me Pokagon Chief." Then he sat down, hit his pony a crack and went on, looking neither to the right nor to the left. He was evidently going through the country in state to make an impression on the white settlers. I got well acquainted with Pokagon afterwards and found him to be a very good neighbor.²¹

Joshua D. Miller, another citizen who settled in St. Joseph County in 1830, said :

I know all about that Pokagon Village for I used to play with the little Indian boys. . . . The village of five or six good log houses and a lot of wigwams made of poles and bark, was grouped around a big spring that was the source of what was called the Pokagon Run, a little creek about a mile long that emptied into the St. Joe River. . . .

The Pokagon band was composed of all good Indians. There was a log church on a hill overlooking the village and Father Badin, the Catholic Missionary used to hold services there. Old Chief Pokagon was a good Indian and made his people go to church. The village was nice and clean and the villagers raised enough corn and other things over on the prairie a half mile or so away, to keep themselves well provided. Pokagon was the leading chief of all the Potawatomi bands and they depended greatly on his judgment. Topenebee was the great war chief, while Pokagon was the great civil chief. Topenebee's village was a few miles farther up the river nearer the Carey Mission, not far from Niles. My father was present when all the bands for miles and miles around gathered there at the time of the Black Hawk War in 1832 to take some action about joining in with Black Hawk. The White settlers were very much afraid the Potawatomi would join with the Sauk and kill every white person in this part of the country. They began to collect and build stockades to protect themselves. One was built on Terre Coupee prairie near where the old town of Hamilton

²¹*South Bend Tribune*, March 6, 1897.

now stands, one on Dan Miller's farm near Mount Pleasant, and another in South Bend about where the Stand Pipe is now.

I don't know what would have happened then if it hadn't been for Pokagon. The Indians were cross and surly. . . . Several of the chiefs spoke and of course it was all in the Indian language and the whites could not understand much of it, although it was interpreted into English by a half-breed. After all the chiefs had had their say, Pokagon arose to speak and immediately the big assemblage, all confusion before, was all attention now.

Pokagon was a natural orator. He was a man not so very tall but with a heavy set, solid frame and very regular, intelligent features. He spoke with great deliberation, making graceful, easy, effective gestures. The council tent was breathless as he proceeded with his speech, warning his people of the consequences of going to war with the whites at this time and of the utter folly of uniting their fortunes with an adventurer like Black Hawk. Pokagon pleaded with such eloquence that he carried his dusky audience with him and the Potawatomi kept away from Black Hawk except a scattering few who sneaked away and were never seen again about this region.

Pokagon was a power among the Indians and he was smart enough to take care of himself. The government couldn't drag him and his band off to Kansas with the rest. He staid here, traded his land and his village and farm on Portage Prairie for some land over in Michigan and he and the whole band moved over there in 1837. I saw little of them after that, but some of the log houses of the old village were standing not over fifteen or twenty years ago.²²

So Pokagon, seemingly free from the stains of Indian weakness, was regarded by all who knew him as temperate, honest, upright, peaceful, and submissive. Though exacting in matters of duty and honor, he was in reality of a very sympathetic nature. McCoy relates an incident that would impress one as being quite unusual for an Indian of his time. A large band of Sauk Indians passed by the Pokagon Village on their return from Detroit in August, 1827.

A few days after the Sauks had passed on, Pocagin and his wife visited us, bringing with them an Indian boy, apparently about eleven years of age, supposed to be a Naudowisse (Sioux) whom they had purchased of the Sauks. Pocagin having heard that in divers villages of the Putawatomies the Sauks had been offering a person for sale, went to them and proposed purchasing. He gave for the boy three horses, saddles, and bridles, and other property equal in value to a fourth horse. The boy had been taken prisoner by the Sauks, and ill-treated. Several scars on him were pointed out to us, occasioned by the blows of a cruel old woman to whom he had belonged. In making the purchase, it seemed that Pocagin had been actuated, in a good degree, by humane motives. . . . In evidence of the sincerity of our commendation of this praiseworthy deed, we presented the boy with a couple of garments, of which we perceived he was still in want.²³

²²*South Bend Tribune*, March 6, 1897.

²³McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, p. 314.

Some authorities claim that Pokagon helped in the Fort Dearborn Massacre in 1812 but this seems to be an error. His loyalty to the whites on all other occasions makes his friendship in this particular event seem the natural position for him to have taken. After the Indians signed the Treaty of Greenville, Pokagon seems to have always advised his people to be true to their allegiance and rely on peaceful means to right their wrongs.²⁴ At this time Topenebee was friendly and recorded as well as traditional history credits Pokagon with stronger loyalty and regard for the pioneers than was shown by Topenebee. It is only natural that the head chief's name should be mentioned in contemporary writings rather than that of Pokagon who was only civil chief under him.

Simon Pokagon claimed that his father was with Sawawk and Topenebee in northern Michigan and rode in great haste when they learned the attack was on. They were too late to prevent the attack, but Pokagon and two other chiefs counseled regarding terms of surrender and also, under cover of darkness, helped the wounded commandant, Captain Nathan Heald, to escape to the lake shore and from there, with other survivors, across the lake to St. Joseph, and up the river to the old Indian villages. After a few days the Healds were conducted to Mackinac by a friendly Indian, but the Kinzies remained at the Indian villages until the following November when Mrs. Kinzie and the children were taken to Detroit and delivered to the British Indian agent as prisoners of war.²⁵

Chief Pokagon always contended that if there had been no "fire-water" there would have been no Fort Dearborn Massacre. The revolting event was due wholly to criminal recklessness.

²⁴*History of St. Joseph County*, pp. 334, 522.

²⁵Pokagon, Simon, "The Massacre of Fort Dearborn at Chicago," in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 98, pp. 649-56; Kinzie, *Wau-Bun*, pp. 210-47; Blanchard, *Discovery and Conquests of the Northwest*, pp. 267-84; Fuller, George N. (ed.), *Historic Michigan . . .*, Vol. 3, pp. 119, 162; Helm, Linai T., *The Fort Dearborn Massacre, written in 1814 . . .*, edited by Nelly K. Gordon, pp. 52-53, 74-76 (Chicago, 1912). Milo M. Quaife, in *Chicago and the Old Northwest 1673-1835*, pp. 220 ff. (Chicago, 1913), speaks of the friendly Potawatomi but does not mention the name of either Topenebee or Pokagon. See also Mason, E. G., "Flaws in the Pokagon Tale," in *Chicago Tribune*, February 8, 1897.

The older Potawatomi chiefs were all against the attack but the young braves were so indignant when they found that Captain Heald had broken faith with them and destroyed all the ammunition and whiskey, that it was impossible to prevent the attack.

Pokagon proved his allegiance to the white man in various ways and attempted as best he could to be like the friends whom he admired so much. When Johnny Appleseed came to his village he hitched an ox and horse to his "flaming chariot" and drove him to the Tippecanoe River. All marvelled at the craftsmanship of this wagon. The hay-rack bed was placed on hickory axles and the solid wheels, hewed, burned, and scraped out of white oak cross sections were painted a bright red. No one could understand how he copied the idea of the Oriental pattern for his wagon. When questioned he remained silent and chose not to discuss it.²⁶

As the white settlers began to come in large numbers to the region of northern Indiana and southern Michigan there was a demand for the land held by the Indians. The government had been gradually acquiring their lands in the Northwest and wanted to make treaties extinguishing the Indian title to the remainder of the lands and remove the Indians west of the Mississippi River.

The Pokagon Village was ceded to the government by the treaty made at Chicago in September, 1833.²⁷ Pokagon was the last to sign and then he did so only upon the urging of Colonel Taylor. As he took the pen and walked to the table, tears ran down his dusky cheeks and on to his buckskin jacket, and he said, "I would rather die than do this."²⁸

Though suffering keenly and failing to see any justice in being forced to move, Pokagon held to his Christian faith, for he was fully convinced that it was much better to endure a

²⁶Bartlett, *Tales of Kankakee Land*, pp. 225-26; Atkinson, Eleanor, *Johnny Appleseed*, pp. 244-45, 261 (New York, 1915); Pershing, Henry A., *Johnny Appleseed and His Time*, pp. 237-39 (Strasburg, Va., 1930); *South Bend Tribune*, March 6, 1897.

²⁷Kappler, Charles J. (ed.), *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties*, Vol. 2, p. 410 (Washington, 1904).

²⁸*South Bend News-Times*, March 15, 1898.

wrong than to commit one. He did not blame the government for the wrongs heaped upon his people but seemed to understand that the trouble was due to the scheming, conniving Indian agents and settlers who were seeking their lands for the sake of speculation. Blanchard says: "They were the unwitting instruments by which several hundred white claimants brought charges against the government either for property said to have been destroyed or stolen by them, or for services done the state in times of Indian disturbances."²⁹

Pokagon had watched the white settlers encroaching upon his prairie domain and foresaw what would be the ultimate outcome. Fully realizing that the Indians must submit to the inevitable, he began to enter land in Michigan in 1836. By the treaty concluded on the Tippecanoe River in October, 1832, Pokagon and his wife had each been granted one section of land.³⁰ From the sale of his section he purchased 712.8 acres surrounding Long Lake, in what is now Silver Creek Township, Cass County.³¹ Following the Chicago Treaty Pokagon requested that he and his band be permitted to remain in Michigan and his request was granted because of their peaceful attitude. It was also agreed that all annuities payable to them under former treaties and that arising from the sale of the reservation on the St. Joseph River should be paid to them at L'arbre Croche on Little Traverse Bay.³²

About 1837 the migration into Cass County was made. The occasion was one of deepest sorrow for the Indians and many of the old settlers regretted their departure.³³ In their new home, which was located about six miles north and west of Dowagiac, the Indians organized the first Catholic Church in that community. It was a little low building, twenty by thirty feet, built of hewed logs, and with rough-cut benches and dirt floor. It was located on the highest hill on the northern shore

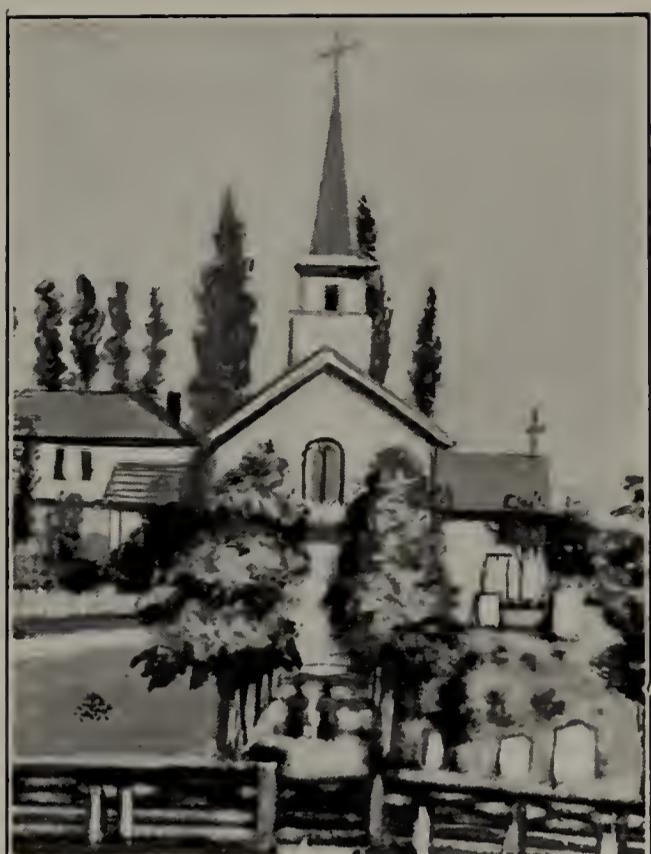
²⁹Blanchard, Rufus, *The Discovery and Conquests of the Northwest . . .*, Vol. I, p. 587 (Chicago, 1898).

³⁰Kappler (ed.), *Laws and Treaties*, Vol. 2, p. 373.

³¹Harmon Abstract Record, Cassopolis, Michigan. Section 11, 296.34 acres, section 14, 268.23 acres, and section 21, 148.23 acres.

³²Kappler (ed.), *Laws and Treaties*, Vol. 2, pp. 411-13.

³³*History of St. Joseph County*, p. 335.



SILVER CREEK CHURCH, BUILT IN 1859



PRESENT SILVER CREEK CHURCH

[Chief Leopold Pokagon and his wife are buried beneath this church.]

of Long Lake.³⁴ The Indians struggled to build the church alone, but did not know how to raise it. Finally some of the white neighbors took pity and helped them finish it.

Chief Pokagon spent his few remaining years in a characteristic attempt to settle his people in their new home and help them make adjustments to new neighbors and a strange environment. In spite of the energy and hopefulness which had always marked his action, it must have seemed a gigantic task to make a new beginning.

Pokagon saw himself isolated in a lonesome forest, and the remembrance of calamities which had come upon him and his people overwhelmed him. He saw . . . on every side the land which he had sold, tilled and inhabited by people whose homes augmented his vexation. The Chief could not be comforted in the presence of such reverses; his life had become miserable; he ardently desired to depart from this world of corruption and iniquity, so that he might see the Great Spirit whom he loved and served so faithfully ever since he had known Him. His desires were soon gratified as God called him from this earth on July 8th, 1841, at the age of 66. This grand old Chief had served his people as best he could for 42 years and as a mark of respect he was lain to rest beneath the new log church that he loved so well.³⁵

Following the death of Chief Leopold Pokagon, his eldest son, Paul, ruled as chief; then the next son, Francis, followed. At the time of the latter's death the Indians had become citizens and elected their chief by vote.

Chief Pokagon had allowed each family to choose its own portion of land, to build a cabin, and live there. He had bought the land in his own name, using money obtained from the sale of his own section of land, but he evidently intended that each family should have its own portion. Unaccustomed to legal procedure and not foreseeing any difficulties, he did not give them title to these lands before his death. However, while very sick, he called the heads of families to his bedside and asked whether each wanted his own little plot or whether they wished to continue in the tribal manner. Not comprehending any other manner of living, they chose to continue as a tribe, and did not, therefore, receive individual deeds to their particular plots.³⁶ Many supposed that the new homes had been pur-

³⁴Glover, Lowell H. (ed.), *A Twentieth Century History of Cass County, Michigan*, p. 372 (Chicago and New York, 1906).

³⁵Kelly, *Life of Father Baroux*, pp. 67-68.

³⁶Personal communication with William Augusta, Silver Creek.

chased with funds derived from the sale of the old Pokagon Village, but Baroux states that Pokagon had used this money to buy provisions to feed the tribe during the winter.³⁷

When the widow of Chief Pokagon wanted these families to give her money for the taxes they could not understand why they should do so, and when the son who was acting as chief, at the instigation of a state agent who was his neighbor, determined to force them to pay the price of property which they considered their own, they were not willing to listen to demands which seemed unjust. The tribal troubles became more and more serious until, in 1851, the disgruntled members resolved to move eight leagues away, to Rush Lake in Van Buren County. Here they chose William Sinagaw for their new chief. With a small pittance they had received from the Silver Creek estate and some tribal money they bought new property, each family receiving a portion of land in his own title. About two-thirds of the Silver Creek band withdrew and moved to Rush Lake; the remaining one-third acquired five acres of land near the Silver Creek Church and town hall.³⁸

Another sorrow depressed and discouraged the Silver Creek settlement in 1851. The widow of the departed chief became ill and died. Father Baroux's story is our only record.

Like him, Chief Pokagon, she was baptized and preserved her first fervor to the end. In her last illness she prepared for death with the most edifying resignation. I, myself, was ill at the time. Several times during the day she sent to see if it were possible for me to rise and go to hear her confession and administer the last sacraments. The evening of her death, message after message was sent. I was unable to refuse such ardent entreaties. I was so weak that it was necessary to help me to get into a cart. I lay down upon a little straw and thus proceeded to the presence of the dying woman. After receiving the last sacraments and thanking me she told me she was glad to leave this world and join those who had preceded her.

All the savages love to visit those who have reached the threshold of eternity; they love to hear and meditate on their last words. It is like a sacred charge which they keep in their families. All were eager to visit for the last time the wife of their chief for whom they justly grieved. Simon Pokagon, the youngest of the children, wrote the last

³⁷Kelly, *Life of Father Baroux*, pp. 81-82. Schedule A, supplementary to the Chicago Treaty of 1833, granted \$2,000 to Pokagon "in lieu of Reservations of Land." Kappler (ed.), *Laws and Treaties*, Vol. 2, p. 412.

³⁸*Hartford Day Spring*, October 2, 1915.

recommendations of his mother and these were preserved as a precious will. He gave me a copy.

First word. I am going to see my dead children to whom I will be united.

Second word. It is dangerous to love this world. God has opposed it.

Third word. My children, love God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your strength. This is the first and the greatest commandment.

Fourth word. God wills to see me.

Fifth word. My children, you must all go to confession and baptize your children.

Sixth word. The Great Spirit is in Heaven. He is a Good Father to us.

After having pronounced these last words she rendered her soul to God at eight o'clock in the evening, Oct. 3, 1851.

I have never seen anything more touching than the last moments of a savage. It is always the same spirit of faith which animated them. What has impressed me the most is that perfect calm, admirable resignation, that ardent desire with which they leave the world to go to God. They are animated by all these saintly dispositions because their life has been entirely spiritual and wholly detached from the goods of the world.³⁹

Father Baroux came to the Silver Creek community in 1846. The next year he remodeled the original church and supplied pews. In 1859 a new wooden church replaced the log one. Father Baroux had narrowly escaped drowning while returning from India in 1857. At that time he made a vow that if his life was preserved he would build a church in honor of the Sacred Heart of Mary at Silver Creek. Two years later he returned to America and fulfilled his vow.⁴⁰

³⁹Kelly, *Life of Father Baroux*, pp. 83-85.

⁴⁰Father Baroux to Father Sorin, March 24, 1890. Manuscript letter in Archives of University of Notre Dame.

SIMON POKAGON

Before the Pokagons removed from their village in the St. Joseph Valley a son, Simon, was born to Leopold Pokagon. Each spring the Indians retired to the sugar camps near the present village of Pokagon in Cass County to make maple sugar and plant corn. Here in the spring of 1830 Simon Pokagon was born. The site is about one-half mile west of the town of Pokagon and north of the largest mound in the vicinity.¹

The first few years of Simon's life were spent at the old Pokagon Village near Bertrand, where he enjoyed hunting and fishing with Joseph Bertrand. He was fond of going to South Bend to look on at the public dances which were held in the old American House on the Coonley Corner.

He was always there when a dance occurred, and looked steadily on as the white lads and lasses whirled through the mazy, dreamy waltz, the schottische or the reel, all through the night, or as long as the festivities continued. On one of these occasions, towards midnight, when the crowd was quite hilarious, the orchestra, two fiddles and a fife struck up a lively jig and spontaneously everybody took the floor and indulged in a genuine old "hoe-down."

Simon stood in a corner like a bronze statue, gazing placidly on while the other boys and girls were dancing as merry as could be. "Come on Sime," shouted one of the fellows as he passed the Indian boy, and without further invitation Simon suddenly darted out into the middle of the floor and joined in the jubilee. This wholly unexpected movement gave renewed impetus to the fun and shouts of delight filled the air; never before had the ballroom of the old tavern experienced such a boisterous scene.

For a little while Simon kept within the bounds of propriety, swinging his partners on the corners according to rule, but soon he became excited and captivated with joy. He sassayed up and down the hall, in and out among the dancers, paying no attention to time or figure and often touched his head to the low ceiling in his wild jumps. Gradually the others left the floor and Simon had the main portion of the room to himself. He was thrilled and could not stop; he went through all the movements of the genuine Indian war dance, whoop and all, while the company shouted and applauded with inexpressible delight. Not until he had become completely exhausted did Simon give up the dance; then he staggered out the door and quietly proceeded home.²

¹Abner Moon of Dowagiac, Michigan, who acted as attorney for Simon Pokagon, and Dana P. Smith of Paw Paw, Michigan. The latter became interested in the Indians while making the archaeological survey for the government in Cass County; he gained their confidence and was often called upon to advise them.

²*South Bend Tribune*, March 17, 1894.



SIMON POKAGON

Until he was twelve years of age, Simon knew only the native language; then, eager for a good English education, he studied four or five years at Notre Dame, one year at Oberlin, Ohio, and two years at Twinsburg, Ohio. He was often spoken of as the best-educated and most distinguished full-blooded Indian in America.

After leaving school he served as interpreter and at one time managed a tribe of two or three hundred Indians. However, only the title of chieftain descended to him. When the last treaty allowance was paid in 1865 the reason for tribal organization ceased and the Indians were placed upon the same basis as other citizens. Elections were held afterwards every two years to choose a secretary for the band. For many years this election was held at Rush Lake near the old Indian church. They met there under a big beech tree and those favoring certain leaders gathered around their choice to be counted. It was a simple custom but it was faithfully observed and Simon Pokagon was chosen many times.

Soon after returning from college, Simon, accompanied by his mother and his old friend, Joseph Bertrand, retired to the wilderness to fish and hunt.³ Here in the land of the Ottawa, near Black River, he met Lonidaw Sinagaw whose English name was Angela.⁴ Her parents were living at Menominee's Village at Twin Lakes, Indiana, when the Potawatomi there were surrounded while at worship, imprisoned, and marched away to Kansas.⁵ Angela's parents became separated at this time and the mother escaped and hid in the swamp. She had been the foster sister and playmate of Simon's mother in childhood while the father was Chief Sinagaw, a subchief under Leopold Pokagon, later becoming the first chief of the Rush Lake band. The mothers had been separated since this terrifying experience until brought together by their children's friendship. Eventually this chance meeting of Simon and Lonidaw

³Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, pp. 49-61.

⁴Ibid., p. 66.

⁵Ibid., pp. 79-82; Dunn, *True Indian Stories*, pp. 241-43; McDonald, *History of Marshall County*, p. 24; Stuart, "Transportation of Pottawatomies," in *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 18, pp. 260-61.

developed into a warm and devoted admiration and after spending another year in school Simon hastened back to the land of the Ottawa to claim her for his bride. They established their home on the shore of Long Lake (Sa-gai-gan).⁶

To this happy union came four children, Cecilia, William, Charles, and Jerome. On December 1, 1871, the mother died. She was only thirty-five years of age according to the inscription on the monument which was erected at her grave. Though the four children were small, the father tenderly cared for them himself until they were large enough to send away to school at the Haskell Institute. On their return he again organized the home and cared for them unaided until they were grown. About this time he took for his second wife, Victoria, a refined, educated woman who proved to be a real helpmate, making a kind stepmother and devoted wife.

A granddaughter, Julia Pokagon Quingo, remembers her grandfather as being very kindhearted and possessing a cheerful disposition which was plainly visible in his kindly face and friendly handclasp. Mrs. Quingo relates that he devoted his entire life to assisting the priests and acting as interpreter and mediator for his people. He would move from place to place, wherever he seemed to be most needed. At home he was kind and gentle and always very devoted to his children and grandchildren. They were always eager to have him return from town for he never failed to bring them candy; but as he enjoyed seeing them sing and dance, they always had to perform before he would give it to them. He was inclined to be quiet and retiring and was not very talkative around home or at a council, but when he did speak his remarks were persuasive, direct, and to the point. He hated rambling discussion at a council or in any kind of business dealings and would quickly bring the group back to the point under discussion. At home he loved to sit and reflect quietly and write; when tired he would relax by gently rocking and humming to himself and later poring over a book. He loved music most of all and in his free moments he was always humming or singing church hymns. After his

⁶Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, p. 162.

home was established he lost interest in hunting and in later life never resorted to this form of recreation.

The following sketch was written by Mrs. Harriet H. Hayes who knew Simon Pokagon from the time of the World's Fair when she served as a member of the Fort Dearborn Committee.⁷

Simon Pokagon, hereditary chieftain of the Potawatomi of near Hartford, was first brought into national and international prominence when he was an especially invited guest of honor at the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893, on "Chicago Day" to meet foreign potentates. He gave a noonday address standing on a high platform in the World's Fair grounds, the old Liberty Bell of the United States suspended above him. The multitude of school children invited to hear him was augmented by many eagerly listening parents and grandparents, the latter whose first school days were in old Fort Dearborn. Pokagon will never be forgotten by anyone who saw or heard him that day. The old hereditary chieftain of the Potawatomi of the Lake-Shore region of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan was dressed as an American business man. His tall erect form when swayed by his sincere oratory caused his refinement and actual culture to be evident to all.

Needless to say his joy was beyond words when he was greeted by two old Chicago gentlemen of his own age, Alexander Beaubien, son of Jean Baptiste Beaubien of the Astor Fur Trading Company of Chicago, and Fernando Jones of the Chicago Title and Trust Company who had been his boyhood playmate whenever his father had visited Fort Dearborn, taking his little son with him.

Chicago in those years had less than one hundred white people including the children, and six thousand Indians living in near-by villages. Fernando Jones's greeting to Pokagon on "Chicago Day" was the Indian call of "approaching in peace," that ear-splitting, rattling, guttural sound, so often heard in Fort Dearborn's years. As Pokagon listened in startled wonderment, Mr. Jones's tall form finally emerged from the thickly packed multitude that had assembled to hear Pokagon's address. Pokagon's memory greeted Mr. Jones with a joyful "Optogeshik" (orator).

Thus three old men, all past seventy years of age, were now standing like great forest trees, representing the three races of early Chicago—Indian, French, and American—meeting each other as brothers on this momentous and marvelous "Chicago Day" of 1893.

In the early evening of this day, Simon Pokagon represented his father in a historical tableau of a floating pageant. He portrayed Chief Leopold Pokagon of the long ago when delivering the legal document to the United States military officials for the government's purchase of the land surrounding Fort Dearborn for many miles. . . . This tableau was seen by the throng of World's Fair visitors through powerful search-lights whose rays were thrown out from the shore and thus flooded with light the floating barge, a big war canoe of birch bark which slowly swung along the chain of lagoons in Jackson Park. . . .

The gorgeous coloring of the ancient Indian regalia of a great chief, with his immense headdress of long eagle feathers standing erect like a crown, and the similar costumes worn by Pokagon's official escorts, stood out like a picture from the palette of an Old World master, a

⁷This sketch was written especially for this publication. The original is in the library of the Northern Indiana Historical Society.

climax of riotous colors when seen against the contrasting military blue and buff of the United States officers of 1803 and 1816 who received the long-folded document being delivered by Lake Michigan's eastern-shore Indians of the United States. . . .

The first float of this historical pageant portrayed the historical scene of the buying of the land around Fort Dearborn. The pictures with a woodland background and other historic scenes followed like chapters in a book and portrayed the events of succeeding years in historical sequence, but far more vividly and interesting to the eye and ear of the onlookers than any fairy story ever written. Thousands witnessed this spectacular pageant of many floats and while three generations marvelled at the magnificence and beauty, one, the oldest one, again lived in memories the early and thrilling history of this wonderful land of ours, as told by government annals and historians of old.

During the two years following the World's Fair, Pokagon often visited in the homes of several old gentlemen in the summer and autumn. He had been regally entertained on "Chicago Day" at the World's Fair by Chicago's mayor, the elder Carter Harrison, and national officials. After this event, when citizens of his own age sent special invitations for week-end visits, he came and enjoyed meeting their friends, especially the younger folks, the school children of many nations now united as one race in this great industrial city of Chicago.

Later when a large school near Jackson Park asked Pokagon to write a song for their mid-winter entertainment, he enthusiastically and promptly responded with the romance-words "Queen of the Woods," at the same time requesting that the melody when composed should sound like the swaying of the breeze among the pines in the primeval forest. Thus the Ray School of Hyde Park, a grammar school near the University of Chicago, had a song of their own from Pokagon, and it was sung by a tall boy in Indian costume.

When the program opened the audience was thrilled to see old Mr. Jones come into the room. Though seventy years of age he had braved weather twenty degrees below zero and at night to come several miles by street car to wear an Indian suit bought by him from the Chicago Indians, in 1835 when he was fifteen years of age. This suit can now be seen at the Chicago Historical Society. Mr. Jones, Pokagon, and Mr. Beaubien passed to another world soon after this famous school concert, Pokagon dying a few weeks later. The children gave several concerts, and a new generation of junior American citizens honored early Chicago and the Lake-Shore Indians of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, the Potawatomi of old. Pokagon had greatly enjoyed helping with and reading about this interesting school concert of the "Songs of Many Nations."

The Indian costume worn by Pokagon in the tableau of the Indian transfer of the Chicago land to the United States had been made to order especially for this occasion at the World's Fair. Pokagon had never worn Indian garments since very early childhood, and after the entire state of Michigan had been canvassed for an old-time Indian costume, it was discovered that not one Indian suit of bygone years could be found; neither could they find a "War Bonnet," the official head-dress always worn at great ceremonials. Therefore, when Pokagon's photograph was taken in this attire . . . his face looked unnatural in the high feathered crown. A portrait that represented him as he looked in his home during the last summer of his life was painted by E. A. Burbank for the Field Museum and a duplicate for the Ayer's Room of Indian history in the Newberry Library, Chicago, at the request of

Queen of the Woods.

Words by POKAGON II, Hereditary Chief of Pottawatomies.

(To be sung like the swaying of the breeze among the trees of the forest.)

SOLO. > >

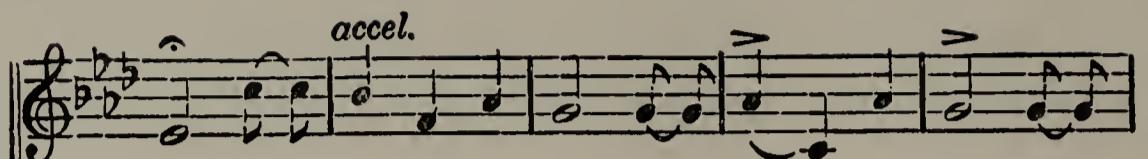
1. Now listen, dear children, there's
2. The flowers looked up and
3. As she skimm'd o'er the lake in her
4. In the wild rose and dewdrop no

pp Dolce andantino. cres.

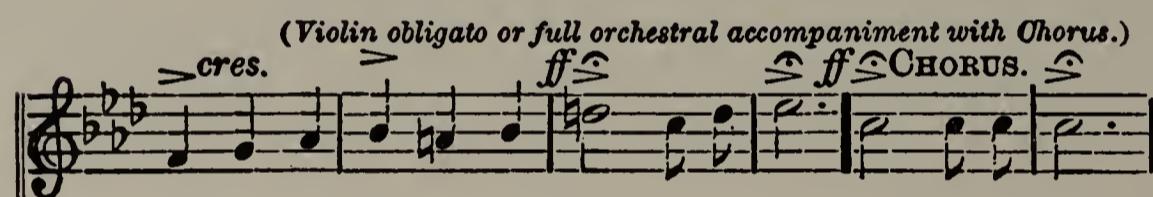
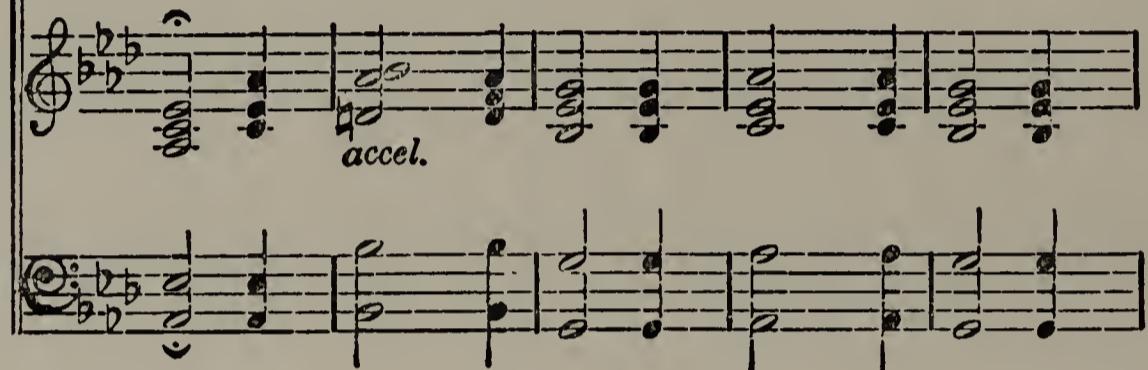
cres. rit. > > >

cres. cres. rit.

(321)



go ! To whom squirrels would chat, in the best way they could, And all
sang. And wherev - er she went, in her sun-shin - y mood, The
low, As she sang the sweet songs of days of child-hood, While the
grew, I wooed and I won this fair maid so good, And



hail the fair maid-en as Queen of the wood !
chil - dren all hailed her as Queen of the wood ! } Queen of the woods !
winds and the waves murmur'd "Queen of the wood!" }
Po - kagon's bride was then Queen of the wood !



Repeat Chorus.

Queen of the woods! All Hail, all Hail! Queen of the woods!

pp (echo.) f ff (echo.) fff rit.

Music by Mrs. H. H. Hayes, a student of Indian melody.

Copyright, 1912, by H. H. Hayes.

Edward E. Ayer, the donor. These portraits of Pokagon show his high intelligence and his kindly and ideal old age.

Charles E. Engle of Hartford, Michigan, a young lawyer who came from New England to the wilderness of Michigan, was a close and trusted friend of Simon Pokagon. One afternoon he became lost in the woods and traveled footsore and weary for hours before finding a clearing. When he knocked on the door of a little log cabin, a tall young Indian opened the door. As Mr. Engle asked for directions to some near-by settlement for the night's shelter he noticed that the Indian had been reading a Greek Testament which he held in his hand with the open page in sight. Mr. Engle, amazed, asked how such a classical book had found its way into the western wilderness. Pokagon smilingly replied, modestly, that he had studied it at Oberlin College when the new school had offered young Indians an educational opportunity with the sons of white pioneers. Mr. Engle and Pokagon became very devoted friends and both lived to old age in the closest and most congenial companionship.

Pokagon, besides having a fine academic education, was a great lover of music and sang well in Latin, English, and the Indian languages. He was also a talented organist for many years in the little Catholic Church in the country near his hereditary farm home, a few miles from Hartford, he leading the Indian choir in the Latin masses as interpreted by himself into their own language.

When Pokagon died, Chicago at once offered his family a burial lot in Graceland Cemetery near the grave of John Kinzie; but Michigan claimed Pokagon for his last resting place. It was also proposed that the citizens erect a monument in Jackson Park or a spot near the site of

old Fort Dearborn, commemorating his worthy historical ancestry, but this was never done. Chicago newspapers filled columns with memorial notices of his long life's useful work as an educator and inspirational leader among the Michigan Indians; he often represented them at the national capital in pleas to Congress and to succeeding presidents of the United States. Mr. Engle always accompanied him as legal adviser for the Potawatomi, his services being given free of charge.

Simon Pokagon was a true champion of his race, maintained a love and devotion for his own language, and was very much concerned about the future of his people. It grieved him to see them crowded westward, unable to cope with the modern trend of civilization. He frequently spoke of the false representations in history concerning the Indians and was pained and grieved over their degradation. That he visioned the magnitude of the problem is shown in an article published in the *Forum* in which he said:

You might as well march your warriors into the jaws of an active volcano, expecting to shut off its fire and smoke, as to attempt to beat back the westward trend of civilization. You must teach your sons everywhere that the war-path will lead them but to the grave.⁸

That he keenly realized the lack of regard many had for his people is shown in the following excerpt:

Let us carefully consider if Mis-ko-au-ne-ne-og' (the red man) possesses, or is devoid of, loyalty, sympathy, benevolence, and gratitude,—those heaven-born virtues requisite for Christian character and civilization. But, in doing so, let us constantly bear in mind that the character of our people has always been published to the world by the dominant race, and that human nature is now the same as when Solomon declared that "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him." In our case we have ever stood as dumb to the charges brought against us as did the Divine Master before His false accusers; hence all charges alleged against us in history should be cautiously considered, with Christian charity. There have been, and still are, too many writers who, although they have never seen an Indian in their lives, have published tragical stories of their treachery and cruelty. Mothers, for generations past, have frightened their children into obedience with that dreaded scarecrow, "Look out, or the Injuns will get you!"; creating in the infant mind a false prejudice against our race, which has given birth to that base slander, "There is no good Injun but a dead one." It is therefore no wonder that we are hated by some worse than Satan hates the salvation of human souls.⁹

Simon Pokagon mentions in many of his writings and addresses the wanton disregard shown the graves of his ancestors by the whites:

. . . the burial-places of our fathers have been laid waste by

⁸"The Future of the Red Man," in *Forum*, Vol. 23, p. 704.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 698.

the dominant race, and their graves robbed of their bones and those implements which were buried with them according to our ancient custom. The only excuse, outside of curiosity, yet given by white men for such acts of inhumanity has been the desire that they may better understand the physical development of our forefathers and their ancient history, claiming they were able to read in the battle-axe and spear of stone and in the arrow-head and knife of flint found in our burial-places that we were savages from the beginning.

With my hands uplifted before heaven I have always most solemnly protested against such wanton acts of inhumanity, declaring most emphatically that it is far better for their people to interest themselves in what our people now are and what they may become than to theorize on what they may have been.¹⁰

His devotion to his people, his high ideals, and keen understanding of human nature are well expressed in his various published works. His *Queen of the Woods* has the tang, the zest, and the woodsy flavor of life. It is pulsing with sympathy, heartfelt emotion, and sensitive feeling; a quaint mixture of information, fact, history, pathos, romance, and poetry combined; a plaintive, yet uncomplaining plea for justice and an eloquent and stirring plea for temperance. Lofty sentiments, wise philosophical thoughts, and serious reflection temper and vivify all his writings. It is to be regretted that all his manuscripts were destroyed in the fire which burned his home one year before he died.¹¹ Pokagon's hope and confidence in education, patriotism and loyalty to the government, and his ideas for the solution of the problems concerning the future of his race are well expressed in an article published in the *Review of Reviews*. Concerning the pension system, he wrote:

It kills energy and begets idleness, the mother of vice. It certainly will prove a fatal blow to our people if long continued. . . . It is too much like fattening animals. It forms a nucleus where unprincipled lazy white men gather whose only aim is to satisfy the greed of appetite and the lowest passions of their nature. Most of them, through marriage, become "squaw men," drawing rations from the tribe to whom their wife belongs. And so it is our people are imposed upon, and becoming mixed with the vilest of white men, who are much worse than savages, as is shown by the devil that is born and developed in the half-breeds.

As a solution for some of the evils Pokagon suggested the following:

Break up as soon as possible the last vestige of tribal relations.

¹⁰Pokagon, Simon, "Indian Native Skill," in *Chautauquan*, Vol. 26, No. 5, p. 540.

¹¹The *Niles Sun Star* of February 9, 1897, tells about Pokagon's home burning.

Teach them to know that they owe allegiance to no man on earth except the great chief of the United States. Make each one a present of a beautiful United States flag. They take easily to object lessons, and will soon learn to love the Stars and Stripes, and take great pride in feeling its image in their hearts. They must be taught that they cannot longer live as their fathers did, but must live as white men do, or else lie down and die before the cruel march of civilization. I have sent many children to the government Indian industrial schools, among whom were my own and grandchildren, and have carefully watched the workings of these schools, and was indeed proud to visit them as they met on the World's Fair grounds and exhibited the works which astonished the teachers of white schools. Hence I believe those government schools were conceived by the Great Spirit, and born in the hearts of noble men and women, and fully believe when a great majority of the 28,000 children between six and sixteen who are still unprovided for shall be gathered into the school, and when the reservations are broken up and the people scattered in homes of their own, that then and not until then will the great Indian problem be solved.¹²

All Pokagon's contributions to the literary field portray the earnest and studious thought he was giving to the problems of his race. He realized fully that the Indians were not successfully coping with the inroads of civilization, and while no bitterness was in his heart, yet his poignant grief and disappointment are patiently reflected.

Often in the stillness of the night, when all nature seems asleep about me, there comes a gentle rapping at the door of my heart. I open it; and a voice inquires, "Pokagon, what of your people? What will their future be?" My answer is: "Mortal man has not the power to draw aside the veil of unborn time to tell the future of his race. That gift belongs to the Divine alone. But it is given to him to closely judge the future by the present and the past."¹³

One of the last public appearances of Pokagon was at Holland, Michigan, in 1897, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of the Dutch in the Northwest. He spoke in the afternoon at the City Park and in the evening at a banquet at the Ottawa Beach Hotel. His addresses were typewritten and he read them in a low quavering voice. At the banquet he broke down and his son finished the toast.¹⁴

The editor of the *Review of Reviews* upon learning of his illness, wrote:

Simon Pokagon is one of the most remarkable men of our time. He has been connected in an official capacity with the work of the

¹²"An Indian on the Problems of His Race," in *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 12, p. 695.

¹³Pokagon, "The Future of the Red Man," in *Forum*, Vol. 23, p. 698.

¹⁴*Chicago Tribune*, May 7, 1899.



RUSH LAKE CHURCH

[When last repaired, the Roman effect of architecture was changed to Gothic. The above photograph was taken in 1929.]



GRAVES OF SIMON POKAGON AND HIS FAMILY

[Monument back of Rush Lake Church marks Angela Pokagon's grave. Simon's grave is to the right, unmarked, while the trees mark the graves of their three sons.]

Government's Indian industrial schools, and his great eloquence, his sagacity, and his wide range of information mark him as a man of exceptional endowments. To know such a man as Simon Pokagon is to understand the remarkable ability of some of the Indian chieftains whose names occur in the earlier annals of our country. The average reservation Indian does not seem to bear out the romantic traditions of the "noble red man;" but under more favorable circumstances, in the earlier days, the fine qualities of the Indian were no myth, but a fact recognized and acknowledged by many a white pioneer.¹⁵

His death occurred on January 28, 1899, from pneumonia. He was buried by the side of his first wife in the cemetery of the Rush Lake Church. It was his request that no monument be placed over his grave.¹⁶ Nineteen months later his second wife died and was buried in the same cemetery. The graves of his four children are also there.

The following notice of his death appeared in the *South Bend Tribune*:

The death of Simon Pokagon occurred Friday, January 28, 1899, at his home in Lee Township, Allegan County, a few miles north of Hartford. After an eventful career of nearly seventy years, the last hereditary chief of the Potawatomies, Simon Pokagon, has been gathered to his fathers. He died Friday at his cheerless cabin home in a desolate region of southern Michigan after many weeks of intense suffering. Pokagon was given up to die two months ago, and for weeks the faithful ones of his tribe have sacrificed fuel and necessary home supplies that the last days of this chief might be spent in comfort.

Pokagon's life had been one of sacrifice. He was no warrior. There was no fighting blood in his veins. He belonged to a peaceful band of the famous tribe and followed in the foot-steps of his father as a Christian teacher, an advocate and defender of the red man's rights. He had received a liberal education and was something of an orator as well as a writer. At one time he was in fair circumstances and an honored member of a rich rural community near Hartford, Michigan.

Pokagon's chief employment for years has been the looking after the annuities due his people under the treaties, but withheld on account of disorders among them which made a settlement almost impossible. The amount due was \$118,000 which was to be divided among 272 families; not long since this money was received and divided.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 16, p. 320.

¹⁶ Flower, B. O., "An Interesting Representative of a Vanishing Race," in *Arena*, Vol. 16, p. 248.

¹⁷ The amount as awarded by the Court of Claims in 1894 was \$104,626. United States, *Statutes at Large*, Vol. 28, p. 450. This amount was due the Pokagon band because after removing to their new home they had not shared in all the annuities provided by the various treaties signed by the whole Potawatomi tribe before 1833. Numerous petitions were presented to Congress in an effort to get the claim paid. See 40 Congress, 3 session, Vol. 9, *Executive Documents*, Report No. 61; 41 Congress, 3 session, Vol. 1, *House Miscellaneous Documents*, Report No. 32; 42 Congress, 2 session, Vol. 3, *House Miscellaneous Documents*, Report No. 137; 43 Congress, 1 session, Vol. 1, *House Miscellaneous Documents*, Report No. 45; 43 Congress, 2 session, Vol. 1,

Although he had handled so much land and money, Pokagon died penniless and homeless. He was not, however, friendless and the physicians and other citizens of Benton Harbor, Michigan, exerted themselves to the last to relieve his suffering and save his life. Of late years the old Chief was reduced to actual want by neglecting his own affairs for those of his band and a fire not long ago destroyed his dwelling and all of his valuable relics and papers.

After many years of determined effort Pokagon succeeded in securing for his people the annuity that had rightly been theirs ever since his father signed the treaty that ceded his childhood home and much surrounding land to the government in 1833; but he shared equally with all the others in the distribution of the money, his portion amounting to only about \$400.

The old Chief's first home was about six miles north of South Bend, near the St. Joseph River. For this place he always had great affection and it was his dream of late to be able to buy the old village, to build a home and pass the remainder of his days there. But when his money came from the Government there was not enough to meet the obligations he had incurred in securing it, so the old Chief's dream was never realized and he was compelled to suffer for the plain necessities of life at the end. He was wholly a dependent upon charity. The story of Chief Simon Pokagon's life, if correctly written, would make one of the most interesting, as well as one of the most thrilling and pathetic tales to be found in all Indian History.¹⁸

For some time the district around Rush Lake had been without religious direction. During the time of Father J. Joos's pastorate the Rush Lake Church was abandoned and most of the congregation transferred to Hartford and Watervliet; the solid walnut pews and altar were transferred to the new Watervliet church. This did not meet with the approval of every one and especially not with the Indians of Rush Lake. Many became lax in church attendance, among them, Simon Pokagon. Finally when he married a divorced woman for his second wife, he excommunicated himself. However, because of his past services and interest in the church, permission was given for his burial in the Catholic Cemetery at Rush Lake and for the services of a priest. Through an error made in telephoning, Father Joos was misinformed about the place of the services and drove fifty-two miles through a severe blizzard without being able to render the last sacred rites. After waiting for an hour or more for the arrival of the priest, the funeral cortège proceeded to the cemetery.¹⁹

House Miscellaneous Documents, Report No. 5; 45 Congress, 2 session, Vol. 1, *House Miscellaneous Documents*, Report No. 8; 50 Congress, 1 session, Vol. 10, *House Miscellaneous Documents*, Reports Nos. 3281 and 3502.

¹⁸*South Bend Tribune*, January 28, 1899.

¹⁹*Detroit Free Press*, February 6, 1899.

A P P E N D I X E S



Courtesy Mrs. H. H. Hayes

BIRCH BARK BOOKLETS AND BOX

I

HAZEL EYES' LULLABY¹

By Simon Pokagon

O, close your bright eyes, brown child of the forest,
And enter the dreamland, for you're tired of play;
Draw down the dark curtain with long, silken fringes,
An-na-moosh² will attend on your mystical way.

Chorus:

Hush-a-by, rock-a-by, brown little papoose,
O, can you not see, if you give the alarm?
Zowan³ beside you, is willing and eager
To guard and defend you, and keep you from harm?

Wind-rocked and fur-lined, covered o'er with bright blanket,
Your Cradle is swung 'neath the wide-spreading trees,
Where the singing of birds and chatting of squirrels
Will lull you to rest midst the hum of wild bees.

Chorus:

Your father is hunting to bring home the bear-skin,
While mother plaits baskets of various hue,
No-co-mis⁴ is weaving large mats of wild rushes,
And Nonnee⁵ sends arrows so swift and so true.

II

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN ALGONQUIN

Translated by Simon Pokagon

Nossimaw wawkwing, kitchiwa Kiaia anosowin. Ki ogimawwin ondass, Ki inendam aia apine ogid Aki binish pindg Wawkwing. Migiwe kinawind aw gigig nind pakwegigan, dash bonendam kinawind nind matchi binish ki bonendam igiw tchi matchii gige kinawind; dash wanishima kinawind ka-awia tchijo-bigewin maka ikonaw kinawind tchi matchi, sa kin aia ogimawi-win, dash gash kiewis, dash kitchitwawin, sa apine dash apine, Migeing.

III

THE RED MAN'S GREETING⁶

Shall not one line lament our forest race,
For you struck out from wild creation's face?
Freedom—the selfsame freedom you adore,
Bade us defend our violated shore.

In behalf of my people, the American Indians, I hereby declare to you, the pale-faced race that has usurped our lands and homes, that we have no spirit to celebrate with you the great Columbian Fair now being held in this Chicago city, the wonder of the world.

No; sooner would we hold high joy day over the graves of our departed fathers, than to celebrate our own funeral, the discovery of

¹Written by special request for the *Cradle Songs of Many Nations*.

²A dog. ³Their dog. ⁴Grandmother.

⁵Little brother. ⁶First called "The Red Man's Rebuke."

America. And while you who are strangers, and you who live here, bring the offerings of the handiwork of your own lands and your hearts in admiration, rejoice over the beauty and grandeur of this young republic, and you say, "Behold the wonders wrought by our children in this foreign land," do not forget that this success has been at the sacrifice of our homes and a once happy race.

Where these great Columbian show-buildings stretch skyward and where stands this "Queen City of the West" once stood the Red Man's Wigwam; here met their old men, young men and maidens; here blazed their council fires. But now the eagle's eye can find no trace of them. Here was the center of their wide-spread hunting grounds, stretching far eastward, and to the great salt Gulf southward, and to the lofty Rocky Mountain chain westward. All about and beyond the Great Lakes northward roamed vast herds of buffalo that no man could number, while moose, deer and elk were found from ocean to ocean; pigeons, ducks, and geese in near bow-shot moved in great clouds through the air, while fish swarmed our streams, lakes and seas close to shore. All were provided by the Great Spirit for our use; we destroyed none except for food and dress. We had plenty and were contented and happy.

But alas! the pale faces came by chance to our shores, many times very needy and hungry. We nursed and fed them,—fed the ravens that were soon to pluck out our eyes and the eyes of our children, for no sooner had the news reached the Old World that a new continent had been found, peopled with another race of men, than locust-like, they swarmed on all our coasts, and, like carrion crows in spring that in circles wheel and clamor long and loud, and will not cease until they find and feast upon the dead, so these strangers from the East made long circuits, and they, turkey-like, gobbled in our ears, "Give us gold, give us gold. Where find you gold, where find you gold?"

We gave for promises and gew-gaws all the gold we had, and showed them where to dig for more. To repay us they robbed our homes of fathers, mothers, sons and daughters; some were forced across the seas for slaves in Spain while multitudes were dragged into the mines to dig for gold and held in slavery there until all who escaped not, died under the lash of the cruel task-master. It finally passed into their history that, "the Red Man of the West, unlike the Black Man of the East, will die before he'll be a slave." Our hearts were crushed by such base ingratitude and, as the United States has now decreed, "No Chinaman shall land upon our shores," so we then felt that no such barbarians as they, should land on ours.

In those days that tried our father's souls, tradition says, a crippled, grey-haired sire told his tribe that in the visions of the night he was lifted high above the earth, and in great wonder beheld a vast spider web spread out over the land from the Atlantic Ocean toward the setting sun. Its net-work was made of rods of iron; along its lines, in all directions rushed monstrous spiders, greater in strength and far larger than any beast of earth, clad in brass and iron, dragging after them long rows of wigwams with families therein, outstripping in their course the flights of birds that fled before them. Hissing from their nostrils came forth fire and smoke, striking terror to both fowl and beast. The Red Men hid themselves in fear, or fled away while the white men trained these monsters for the war path as warriors for battle.

The old man who saw the vision claimed that it meant that the Indian Race would surely pass away before the pale faced strangers. He died a martyr to his belief. Centuries have passed since that time and we now behold in the vision, as in a mirror, the present network of

railroads and the monstrous engines with their fire, smoke and hissing steam, with cars attached, as they go sweeping through the land.

The cyclone of civilization rolled westward; the forests of untold centuries were swept away; streams dried up; lakes fell back from their ancient bounds and all our fathers once loved to gaze upon, was destroyed, defaced or marred, except the sun, moon and starry skies above which the Great Spirit in His wisdom, hung beyond their reach.

Still on the storm cloud rolled while before its lightning and thunder the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air withered like grass before the flame, were shot for the love of power to kill alone and left to spoil upon the plains. Their bleaching bones now scattered far and near, in shame declared the wanton cruelty of the pale faced men. The storm, unsatisfied on land, swept our lakes and streams while before its clouds of hooks, nets, and gleaming spears, the fish vanished from our waters, like the morning dew before the rising sun. Thus our inheritance was cut off and we were driven and scattered as sheep before the wolves.

Nor was this all. They brought among us fatal diseases our fathers knew not of. Our medicine men tried in vain to check the deadly plague but they themselves died and our people fell as fall the leaves before the autumn blast. To be just, we must acknowledge there were some good men with these strangers who gave their lives for ours and in great kindness taught us the Revealed Will of the Great Spirit through His Son Jesus, the mediator between God and man. But while we were being taught to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and strength and our neighbors as ourselves, and while our children were taught to lisp, 'Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name,' bad men of the same race whom we thought of the same belief, shocked our Faith in the revealed will of the Father as they came among us with bitter oaths upon their lips, something we had never heard before and cups of "fire-water" in their hands, something we had never seen before. They pressed the sparkling glasses to our lips and said, "Drink and you will be happy." We drank thereof, we and our children, but alas! like the serpent that charms to kill, the drink habit coiled about the heart strings of its victims, shocking unto death, friendship, love, honor, manhood; all that makes men good and noble; crushing out all ambition, and leaving naught but a culprit vagabond in the place of a man.

Now as we have been taught that our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit and fell, so we as fully believe that this fire-water is the hard cider of the white man's devil, made from the fruit of that tree that brought death into the world and all our woes. The arrow, the scalping knife and the tomahawk used on the war paths were merciful compared with it; they were used in our defense, but the accursed drink came like a serpent in the form of a dove. Many of our people partook of it without mistrust, as children pluck the flowers and clutch a scorpion in their grasp, only when they feel the sting, they let the flowers fall.

But Nature's children had no such power, for when the viper's fangs they felt, they only hugged the reptile the more closely to their breasts while friends before them stood pleading with prayers and tears that they would let the deadly serpent drop. But all in vain. Although they promised so to do, yet with laughing grin and steps uncertain, like the fool, they still more frequently guzzled down the hellish drug. Finally, conscience ceased to give alarm, and led by deep despair to life's last brink and goaded by demons on every side, they cursed themselves, they cursed their friends, they cursed their beggar babes and wives, they cursed their God and died.

You say that we are treacherous, vindictive and cruel; in answer to the charge, we declare to all the world, with our hands uplifted before

high Heaven, that before the white man came among us, we were kind, outspoken and forgiving. Our real character has been misunderstood because we have resented the breaking of treaties made with the United States as we honestly understood them. The few of our children who are permitted to attend your schools, in great pride tell us that they read in your histories how William Penn, a Quaker and a good man, made treaties with nineteen tribes of Indians and that neither he nor they ever broke them and during seventy years, while Pennsylvania was controlled by the Quakers, not a drop of blood was shed nor a war whoop sounded by our people. Your own historians and our traditions show that for nearly two hundred years, different Eastern powers were striving for the mastery in the new world and that our people were persuaded by the different factions to take the war path being generally led by white men who had been discharged from prisons for crimes committed in the Old World.

Read the following, left on record by Peter Martyr who visited our forefathers in the day of Columbus. "It is certain that the land among these people is as common as the sun and water and that mine and thine, the seed of all misery, have no place with them. They are content with so little that in so large a country they have rather a superfluity than a scarceness: so that they seem to live in the golden world without toil, living in open gardens not intrenched with dykes, divided with hedges or defended with walls. They deal truly one with another, without law, without books, without judges. They take him for an evil and mischievous man who taketh pleasure in doing hurt to another, and albeit they delight not in superfluities, yet they make provision for the increase of such roots whereof they make bread, content with such simple diet whereof health is preserved and disease avoided."

Your own histories show that Columbus on his first visit to our shores, in a message to the king and queen of Spain, paid our forefathers this beautiful tribute: They are loving, uncovetous people, so docile in all things that I swear to your majesty there is not in the world a better race or a more delightful country. They love their neighbors as themselves and their talk is ever sweet and gentle, accompanied with smiles, and though they be naked, yet their manners are decorous and praiseworthy.

But a few years passed away and your historians left to be perused with shame the following facts: On the islands of the Atlantic coast and in the populous empires of Mexico and Perue, the Spaniards through pretense of friendship and religion, gained audience with chiefs and kings, their families and attendants. They were received with great kindness and courtesy but in return they most treacherously seized and bound in chains the unsuspecting natives and as a ransom for their release, demanded large sums of gold which were soon given by their subjects. But instead of granting them freedom as promised, they were put to death in a most shocking manner. Their subjects were then hunted down like wild beasts with blood hounds, robbed and enslaved and under a pretext to convert them to Christianity, the rack, the scourge and the fagot were used. Some were burned alive in their thickets and fastnesses for refusing to work the mines as slaves.

Tradition says these acts of base ingratitude were communicated from tribe to tribe throughout the continent and that a universal wail as one voice went up from all the tribes of the unbroken wilderness; we must beat back these strangers from our shores before they seize our lands and homes or slavery and death are ours.

Kind reader, pause here, close your eyes, shut out from your heart all prejudice against our race and honestly consider the above records

penned by the pale faced historians centuries ago, and tell us in the name of eternal truth and by all that is sacred and dear to mankind, was there ever a people without the slightest reason of offense, more treacherously imprisoned and scourged than we have been? And tell us, have crime, despotism, violence and slavery ever been dealt out in a more wicked manner to crush out life and liberty; or, was ever a people more mortally offended than our forefathers were?

Almighty Spirit of humanity, let thy arms of compassion embrace and shield us from the charge of treachery, vindictiveness and cruelty and save us from further oppression! And may the great chief of the United States appoint no more broken-down or disappointed politicians as agents to deal with us, but may he select good men that are tried and true men who fear not to do the right. This is our prayer. What would remain for us if we were not allowed to pray? All else we acknowledge to be in the hands of this great republic.

It is clear that for years after the discovery of this country, we stood before the coming strangers as a block of marble before the sculptor, ready to be shaped into a statue of grace and beauty; but in their greed for gold, the block was hacked to pieces and destroyed. Child-like we trusted in them with all our hearts and as the young nestling while yet blind, swallows each morsel given by the parent bird, so we drank in all they said. They showed us the compass that guided them across the trackless deep and as its needle swung to and fro, only resting to the North, we looked upon it as a thing of life from the eternal world. We could not understand the lightning and thunder of their guns, believing they were weapons of the gods, nor could we fathom their wisdom in knowing and telling us the exact time in which the sun or moon should be darkened; hence we looked upon them as divine; we revered them, yes, we trusted in them as infants trust in the arms of their mothers.

But again and again was our confidence betrayed until we were compelled to know that greed for gold was all the balance wheel they had. The remnant of the beasts are now wild and keep beyond the arrow's reach, the fowls fly high in the air, the fish hide themselves in deep waters. We have been driven from the homes of our childhood and from the burial places of our kindred and friends and scattered far westward into desert places where multitudes have died from homesickness, cold and hunger, and are suffering and dying for want of food and blankets.

As the hunted deer close chased all day long, when night comes on, weary and tired, lies down to rest, mourning for companions of the morning herd, all scattered, dead and gone, so we through many weary years, have tried to find some place to safely rest. But all in vain! Our throbbing hearts unceasingly say, "The hounds are howling on our tracks." Our sad history has been told by weeping parents to their children from generation to generation and as the fear of the fox in the duckling is hatched, so the wrongs we have suffered are transmitted to our children and they look upon the white man with distrust as soon as they are born. Hence our worst acts of cruelty should be viewed by all the world with Christian Charity as being but the echo of bad treatment dealt out to us.

Therefore we pray our critics everywhere to be not like the thoughtless boy who condemns the toiling bees wherever found as vindictive and cruel because in robbing their homes he once received the poisoned darts that nature gave for their defense. Our strongest defense against the onward marching hordes, we fully realize, is as useless as the struggles of a lamb borne high in the air, pierced to its heart in the talons of an eagle.

We never shall be happy here any more; we gaze into the faces of our young men and maidens for the joys of youth to cheer advancing age, but alas, instead of smiles of joy, we find but looks of sadness there. Then we fully realize in the anguish of our souls that their young and tender hearts, in keenest sympathy with ours, have drank in the sorrows that we have felt and their sad faces reflect it back to us again. No rainbow of promise spans the dark cloud of our afflictions; no cheering hopes are painted on our midnight sky. We only stand with folded arms and watch and wait to see the future deal with us no better than the past. No cheer of sympathy is given us; but in answer to our complaints we are told that the triumphal march of the eastern race westward is by the unalterable decree of nature, termed by them "the survival of the fittest." And so we stand as upon the sea shore, chained hand and foot, while the incoming tide of the great ocean of civilization rises slowly but surely to overwhelm us.

But a few more generations and the last child of the forest will have passed into the world beyond, into that kingdom where Tche-ban-you-booz, the Great Spirit, dwelleth; He who loveth justice and mercy and hateth evil; He who has declared that the fittest in his kingdom shall be those alone that hear and aid his children when they cry, those that love him and keep his commandments. In that kingdom many of our people in faith believe he will summon the pale-faced spirits to take position on his left and the red spirits upon his right and that he will say. "Sons and daughters of the forest, your prayers for deliverance from the iron heel of oppression through centuries past are recorded in this book now open before me; it is made from the bark of the white birch, a tree under which for generations past you have mourned and wept. On its pages your sad history has been recorded silently. It has touched my heart with pity and I will have compassion."

Then turning to his left he will say, "Sons and daughters of the East, all hear and give heed unto my words. While on earth I did great and marvellous things for you,—I gave my only Son who declared unto you my will and as you had freely received to so freely give and declare the gospel unto all people. A few of you have kept the faith and through opposition and great tribulations have labored hard and honestly for the redemption of mankind regardless of race or color. To all such I now give divine power to fly on lightning wings throughout my universe. Now, therefore, listen and when the great drum beats, let all try their powers to fly. Only those can rise who acted well their part on earth to redeem and save the fallen."

The drum will be sounded and that innumerable multitude will appear like some vast sea of wounded birds struggling to rise. We shall behold it and shall hear their fluttering as the rumbling of an earthquake and, to our surprise, we shall see but a scattering few in triumph rise and we shall hear their songs reecho through the vault of heaven as they sing, "Glory to the Highest who hath redeemed and saved us."

Then the Great Spirit will speak with a voice of thunder to the remaining shame-faced multitude: "Hear ye, it is through great mercy that you have been permitted to enter these happy hunting grounds. Therefore I charge you in the presence of these Red Men that you are guilty of having tyrannized over them in many and strange ways. I find you guilty of having made wanton wholesale butchery of their game and fish, I find you guilty of using tobacco, a poisonous weed made only to kill parasites on plants and lice on man and beast. You found it with the Red Men who used it only in smoking the pipe of peace to confirm their contracts in place of a seal. But you multiplied its use,

not only in smoking but in chewing, snuffing, and thus forming unhealthy, filthy habits and through cigarettes, the abomination of abominations, taught little children to hunger and thirst after the father and mother of palsy and cancers.

"I find you guilty of tagging after the pay agents sent out by the Great Chief of the United States, among the Indians, to pay off their birth-right claims to home and liberty and native lands, and then sneaking about their agencies by deceit and trickery, cheating and robbing them of their money and goods, thus leaving them poor and naked. I also find you guilty of following the trail of Christian missionaries into the wilderness among the natives and when they had set up my altars and the great work of redemption had just begun and some in Faith believed, you then and there most wickedly set up the idol of man-tchi-man-in-to (the devil), and there stuck out your sign, Sample Rooms. You then dealt out to the sons of the forest a most damnable drug, fitly termed on earth by Christian women as a beverage of hell which destroyed both body and soul, taking therefore, all their money and blankets and scrupling not to take in pawn the Bibles given to them by my servants.

"Therefore know ye, this much abused race shall enjoy the liberties of these happy hunting grounds while I teach them my will which you were in duty bound to do while on earth. But instead, you blocked up the highway that led to heaven that the car of salvation might not pass over. Had you done your duty, they as well as you would now be rejoicing in glory with my saints with whom you, flutteringly tried this day in vain to rise. But now I say unto you, Stand back! You shall not tread upon the heels of my people, nor tyrannize over them any more. Neither shall you practice with weapons of lightning and thunder any more. Neither shall you use tobacco in any shape, way or manner. Neither shall you touch, taste, handle, make, buy or sell anything that can intoxicate any more. And know ye, ye cannot buy out the law or skulk by justice here and if any attempt is made on your part to break these commandments, I shall forthwith grant these Red Men of America great power and delegate them to cast you out of Paradise and hurl you headlong through its outer gates into the endless abyss beneath, far beyond, where darkness meets with light, there to dwell, and thus shut out from my presence and the presence of Angels and the Light of Heaven, forever and ever."

Is not the Red Man's wigwam home
As dear to him as costly dome?
Is not his lov'd one's smile as bright
As the dear one's of th'man that's white?

Simon Pokagon.

IV

ADDRESS OF SIMON POKAGON AT ELKHART, INDIANA, OCTOBER 9, 1894⁷

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am indeed glad that I am permitted to address you, the pioneer fathers and mothers, with your sons and daughters who here inherit my fatherland and enjoy the paradise which you have reclaimed from a wild and unbroken forest. I assure you that this country still holds a sacred place in this native heart of mine. Tradition tells me that my tribe, the Potawatomies, migrated from the great ocean towards the setting sun, in search of a happy hunting ground this side of the eternal world.

In their wanderings they found no place to satisfy and charm until they reached these wide extended plains. Here they found game in great abundance. The elk, the buffalo and deer stood unalarmed before the hunter's bended bow; fish swarmed the lakes and streams close to shore; pigeons, ducks and geese moved in great clouds through the air, flying so low that they fanned us with their wings, and our boys whose bows were yet scarce terror to the crows would often with arrows shoot them down.

Here we enjoyed ourselves in the lap of luxury; but our camp fires have all gone out; our council fires blaze no more; our wigwams and those who built them, with their children, have forever disappeared from this beautiful land and I alone am permitted to behold it. Where cabins and wigwams once stood, now glisten in the sunshine, cottages and palaces erected by another race; and where we walked or rode in single file, along our woodland trails, now locomotives scream like monster beasts of prey, rushing along their iron paths, dragging after them long trains of palaces, filled with travelers out stripping in their course the eagle in his flight.

As I stand here and behold the mighty change that has taken place since my boyhood days all over the face of this broad land, I feel about my heart as I did in boyhood when for the first time I beheld the arched rainbow spanning the dark cloud of the departing storm.

I have been requested to speak somewhat of my own history and people, hence would say that in the fall of 1837 my father, Chief Pokagon with several of our head men went to Washington to see the Great Chief of the United States in regard to our homes in this beautiful land, for it pained our hearts to think of leaving them. They rode their ponies to Wheeling, a city on the Ohio river. Here they left them and went by stage to Baltimore, from there they rode on the cars to Washington, the railroad having been just completed to that place. It took them about three weeks to make the journey.

Twenty-four years after my father's visit I went along nearly the same route by rail to Washington in less than two days. I went to see the greatest and best chief ever known, Abraham Lincoln. I was the first Red Man to shake hands and visit with him after his inauguration. He talked to me as a father would to his son and was glad that we had built churches and school houses. He had a sad look in his face but I knew that he was a good man, I heard it in his voice, saw it in his eyes and felt it in his hand shaking. I told him how my father long ago sold Chicago and the surrounding country to the United States for three cents per acre and how we were poor and needed our pay.

He said he was sorry for and would help us what he could to get our just dues. Three years later I again visited the Great Chief; he excused the delay in our payment on account of the war. He seemed

⁷Published in *South Bend Tribune*, October 10, 1894.

bowed down with care. At this time Grant was thundering before Richmond for its final overthrow, while Sherman was making his grand march to the sea. Some time after this visit we were paid \$390,000. In 1874 when I again visited the city to get the balance of our pay, I met the great war chief, General Grant. I had expected he would put on military importance, but he kindly shook hands with me and gave me a cigar. We both sat down and smoked the pipe of peace. He thanked me for the loyalty of my people and for the soldiers we had furnished during the war. We still had due us from Uncle Sam between one and two hundred thousand dollars. He said that there was a question about our claim; but we got judgment against the government through the court of claims and believe it is worth one hundred cents on the dollar and that it will all be paid as soon as congress gets through scuffling over the tariff.

I have been requested to state the circumstances of our removal from this state by the national government, but I cannot; my young heart was so touched by the sad story, told me by my mother, that all through youth and manhood I have tried to forget it, and again, could I remember the same, I have no desire to harrow my own feelings or those of others by recounting the trying times of other days. But I should dishonor myself on this great occasion, should I fail to declare to you, that there is a monster evil in this beautiful land, born of the white man, that has swept away and destroyed many of our race; and I now warn fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, that almost unseen this deadly monster stalks abroad, among you at noonday and at midnight. It is the serpent of the still. Pokagon hates this loathsome snake. There is no place so guarded or secluded in this land as not to be cursed by it. It crawls about your lawns and farms, along our highways and railways, drinks from your springs and wells, enters your homes, hides itself in the folds of your blankets and crawls among your children while they sleep. The war between capital and labor in this country is carried on by this monster, exciting its votaries to ruin and riot, urging on to the committal of the basest deeds of violence.

I was in Chicago during the hottest week of the Debs' rebellion and I there learned that those who cried against capital the loudest, drank of the cursed firewater most freely.

I must close. I am getting old and feeble, and in all probability none of you will ever see my face again this side of the happy hunting grounds, hence, as a worn out specimen of the forest race, just stepping upon the world beyond, I urge upon you as you value the grand domain you inherited, as you value society, home and all that life holds most dear, to try and do all you can to banish this reptilian monster from your lands. Then heaven will smile upon you and the votaries of temperance and intemperance will shake hands and rejoice together and the sunshine of peace and plenty will lighten with joy and gladness this beautiful land.

V

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